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Military uses screenings to keep virus off US bases

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

Defense Department officials are working to keep coronavirus from spreading onto military bases in the United States, forcing troops returning from overseas deployments to endure multiple medical screenings before going home.

"Overall the broad impact to the U.S. military is very, very minimal," said Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. "We hope to keep it that way."

Milley and Defense Secretary Mark Esper on Monday outlined the preparations underway at military bases across the U.S. to protect service members and their families from the coronavirus outbreak, while also arranging to provide inter-government agency support.

Last week, a flight of 248 Fort Hood soldiers leaving Korea for Texas was delayed in "an abundance of caution" as medical teams assessed whether two sick soldiers had coronavirus, base officials said.

The soldiers are part of the 1st Cavalry Division's 3rd Brigade Combat Team, which began returning last month from a nine-month rotation to Korea, where more than 3,000 coronavirus cases include one service member and his wife.

SEE VIRUS ON PAGE 9

RELATED

Italy-based US paratroopers leave Israel after exercise is canceled
Page 8

Downtown Nashville hit as deadly tornadoes rip through Tennessee

By TRAVIS LOLLER
AND KIMBERLEE KRUESI
Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Tornadoes ripped across Tennessee as people slept early Tuesday, shredding at least 140 buildings and killing at least 22 people. Authorities described painstaking efforts to find survivors in piles of rubble and wrecked basements as the death toll climbed.

One twister caused severe damage across a 10-mile stretch of downtown Nashville, wrecking businesses and homes and

destroying the tower and stained glass of a historic church. Another erased homes from their foundations along a two-mile path in Putnam County.

Daybreak revealed a landscape littered with blown-down walls and roofs, snapped power lines and huge broken trees, leaving city streets in gridlock. Schools, courts, transit lines, an airport and the state Capitol were closed.

More than a dozen polling stations were damaged, forcing Super Tuesday voters to wait in long lines at alternative sites.

SEE TORNADOES ON PAGE 10



MARK HUMPHREY/AP

Above: A man walks through storm debris Tuesday following a deadly tornado in Nashville, Tenn. At top: Rescue workers free Bill and Shirley Wallace from their home that collapsed after a tornado hit the area Tuesday in Mt. Juliet, Tenn.

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Apple to pay up to \$500M over phone slowdown

By RACHEL LERMAN

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — iPhone owners could get \$25 from Apple after the company agreed to pay up to \$500 million to settle claims over intentionally slowing down older phones to preserve older batteries.

Apple and lawyers representing iPhone consumers agreed to a deal stemming from Apple's 2017 admission that it was slowing down phone performance in older

models to avoid unexpected shutdowns related to battery fatigue.

That admission led to Apple offering discounted battery replacements at \$29, but many people claimed that they had already spent hundreds of dollars to buy new phones because Apple didn't reveal the cause of the problem. If they had known they could just buy new batteries, they might not have bought new phones, some consumers in the case said.

Apple did not admit wrongdoing. As part of the settlement, the

company will pay \$310 million to \$500 million, including about \$93 million to lawyers representing consumers.

iPhone users who were named in the class-action lawsuit will get up to \$3,500 each. The rest of the settlement money will be distributed to owners of iPhone 6, 6S, 7 and SE models who meet eligibility requirements related to the operating system they had running. They must file claims to get the award. If too many people file, the \$25 amount could shrink.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		Switzerland (Franc).	
Euro costs (March 4)	\$1.1408	Thailand (Baht)	0.9567
Dollar buys (March 4)	60.8766	Turkey (Lira)	6.1534
British pound (March 4)	\$1.31	(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)	
Japanese yen (March 4)	105.00		
South Korean won (March 4)	1,161.00		
Commercial rates		INTEREST RATES	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3766	Prime rate	4.75
British pound	\$1.2785	Discount rate	2.25
Canada (Dollar)	1.3354	Foreign funds market rate	1.68
China (Yuan)	6.9777	3-month T-bill	1.55
Denmark (Krone)	6.7148	30-year bond	1.55
Egypt (Pound)	15.6498		
Euro	\$1.1129/0.9895		
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7788		
Hungary (Forint)	302.89		
Israel (Shekel)	3.4574		
Japan (Yen)	107.65		
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3650		
Norway (Krone)	9.2821		
Philippines (Peso)	50.85		
Poland (Zloty)	3.88		
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7518		
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3315		
South Korea (Won)	1,192.24		

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	4.75
Discount rate	2.25
Federal funds market rate	1.58
3-month bill	1.55
30-year bond	1.65

WEATHER OUTLOOK

WEDNESDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



WEDNESDAY IN EUROPE



THURSDAY IN THE PACIFIC



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

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MILITARY

Pacific commander tapped to be USAF chief

General would become first African American military service leader

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr. was nominated Monday to become the next Air Force chief of staff, a selection that would make him the first African American to serve as the top uniformed leader of a U.S. military service.

Brown would replace Gen. David Goldfein, the current Air Force chief of staff, who is expected to retire in the summer. Brown, known as “CQ,” now commands U.S. Air Forces Pacific, which is responsible for Air Force operations in the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command area of operations.



Brown

“He’s led worldwide — in the Pacific, Europe, the Middle East and Africa,” the Air Force chief said of Brown.

“When it comes to global, operational savvy, there’s nobody stronger — one of the finest warriors our [Air Force] has ever produced.”

Brown has long been rumored to be among the top candidates to replace Goldfein, who has served as Air Force chief since July 2016.

Brown is a battle-tested fighter pilot who commanded air forces operating in the Middle East — against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria and Afghanistan.

Goldfein tweeted his congratulations to Brown on Monday after his nomination was announced.

Brown is an F-16 pilot with nearly 3,000 flight hours, including some 130 in combat, according to the Air Force. During his 34 years in the military, he has piloted more than a dozen other aircraft, including bombers, helicopters and Osprey tiltrotor aircraft, according to his official biography.

Brown is a 1984 graduate of Texas Tech University and was commissioned through the school’s ROTC program.

He has commanded a fighter squadron, the U.S. Air Force Weapons School, two fighter wings, and served as an adviser to past top Air Force uniformed and civilian leaders. He served as the No. 2 general for U.S. Central Command from July 2016 to July 2018, according to his biography.

If confirmed by the Senate, Brown would become the 22nd Air Force chief. He would also become the first black military service chief.

Retired Army Gen. Colin Powell served

as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1989 to 1993, but he was never Army chief of staff.

Air Force Secretary Barbara Barrett said Brown’s skills would be particularly useful as the Pentagon works to speed up its implementation of the 2018 National Defense Strategy, which places power competition with China and Russia above other national security issues, such as international terrorism emanating from the Middle East and Afghanistan.

“The [Air Force] will be well served by the formidable talents of CQ Brown,” Barrett tweeted. “He has unmatched strategic vision [and] operational expertise. His leadership will be instrumental as the service continues to focus on the capabilities [and] talent we need to implement the National Defense Strategy.”

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Gunship crew cited for heroism during Afghanistan medevac

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

Crew members of a U.S. gunship that kept Islamic State fighters at bay during a medical evacuation in Afghanistan last spring were awarded medals Monday, including two Distinguished Flying Crosses with a designation for “exceptionally meritorious” actions in combat.

The gunship suppressed enemy fire for an hourlong evacuation of 15 patients onto three hovering medevac helicopters.

Aircraft commander Capt. Neils Aberhalden and navigator Capt. John Crandall Jr., with the 4th Special Operations Squadron based at Hurlburt Field, Fla., were awarded Distinguished Flying Crosses with “C” device, the Air Force said in a statement Monday.

An additional 12 airmen with 4th SOS were presented with single event Air Medals with “C” device by Air Force Lt. Gen. Jim Slife, commander of Air Force Special Operations Command, during a ceremony at Hurlburt Field.

“The most lethal part of any gunship is not the 25 mm, the 40 mm or the 105 mm [weapons] sticking out of the side of this big beautiful airplane,” Slife told those attending. “The most lethal part of the gunship is the crew.”

The crew of Spooky 41 — flying an AC-130U, which the Air Force uses for close air support and armed reconnaissance — was called in on the night of April 3 to assist a group of joint American special operations and coalition forces under fire with mounting casualties after an improvised explosive device attack on a mountain in Nangarhar province.

The ground force was entrenched in an assault on a heavily fortified stronghold manned by fighters with Islamic State-Khorasan, an ISIS branch in the region.

“In my 20-plus years of training and experience in the art of attacking and defending ground objectives, I have seen few more formidable defensive positions — or ones more daunting to attack,” Maj. Jeffrey Wright, 24th Special Operations Wing, who led a seven-man special tactics team in the assault, said in an Air Force statement.

“I would have to reach for examples like Normandy, Iwo Jima or Hamburger Hill to appropriately convey the degree to which the enemy were prepared and ready for our assault.”

The enemy had stayed hidden as the assault force closed in, then surprised coalition forces with fire from all directions — including from ceilings above and floors below, he said.

“By using networks of subterranean passageways, the enemy would reappear behind our forces even after they’d cleared buildings,” Wright said.

Reaching a “dire” crossroads with mounting wounded, the assault force called for help from the air.

“In short order, I heard the bark of the AC-130U’s guns,” Wright said. “I distinctly remember wondering whether they were shooting at the right target, given the speed of their reaction — in 10 years as a joint terminal attack controller, I’d never seen any kind of fire support as responsive. Sure enough, the first rounds were right on target — a good thing, because the enemy was so close to the assault force.”

The terrain prevented the three



PHOTOS BY JOSEPH P. LEVIELLE/U.S. Air Force

Air Commandos with the 4th Special Operations Squadron were presented 2 Distinguished Flying Crosses and 12 Air Medals by Lt. Gen. Jim Slife, commander of Air Force Special Operations Command, at Hurlburt Field, Fla., on Monday. The AC-130U “Spooky” Gunship crew was recognized for their performance during a medevac operation in Nangarhar province, Afghanistan, from April 3-4, 2019.

medevac helicopters from landing, so the wounded were hoisted to them in the air.

“This entailed coming to a hover within machine gun range of dozens, if not hundreds, of enemy fighters keen to press home their advantage,” Wright said. Yet the enemy did not get off a single shot as the patients were evacuated, he said.

“The reason there will be no memorials for three separate medical evacuation aircrews is because Spooky 41’s fires were so responsive and so precise that the enemy was effectively neutralized.”

Army Capt. Benjamin Carnell, a Special Operations Force team member and one of the casualties evacuated, thanked the Spooky crew during the ceremony for “rising to the occasion.”

“Without any of that I would not have been hoisted out of there and I wouldn’t be standing here in front of you today, so I am indebted to you in a way that I can’t describe.”



Crew members of a U.S. gunship that kept Islamic State fighters at bay during a medical evacuation in Afghanistan last spring were awarded medals for heroism.

Airmen awarded the Air Medal were Capt. Micah T. Uvegas, Capt. Brian K. Yee, 1st Lt. Nicholas J. Maiolo, Tech. Sgt. Ryan A. Estes, Tech. Sgt. Jacob B. Griffen, Tech. Sgt. Austin L. Parrent, Staff Sgt. Samuel Mayfield, Staff Sgt.

Michael S. Martinez, Staff Sgt. Omar J. Diaz, Staff Sgt. Jonathan M. Friesz, Senior Airman Jacob C. Bateman, and Senior Airman Zadok N. Dean III.

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MILITARY

Navy is overhauling its education system

Strategy reflects erosion of post-Cold War advantages

By JENNIFER McDERMOTT
Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — The U.S. Navy is overhauling its approach to education because the nation no longer has a massive economic and technological edge over potential adversaries, according to a strategy released Monday.

The Education for Seapower Strategy 2020, provided to The Associated Press ahead of its release, is the first unified, comprehensive education strategy for the Navy and Marine Corps, said John Kroger, who is implementing the strategy as the Navy's first chief learning officer.

It is very much a response to the nation's geopolitical position in the world today, versus the advantages it had at the end of the Cold War, Kroger said, noting China's economic strength and investments in 5G networks, energy storage and other major technologies that matter for war-fighting.

The Navy wants to create a naval community college to provide associate's degrees to tens of thousands of young sailors and Marines, at no cost to them. It plans to unify the schools within the existing naval university system, similar to a state university system, and invest in them, as well as enact new policies to encourage and reward those who pursue professional military and civilian education.

"In a world where potential adversaries are peers economically and technologically, how do you win?" Kroger said in an interview. "We think we can out-fight potential opponents because we can out-think them. In order to do that, we must have, by far, the best military education program in the world."

Kroger came to the Navy from Harvard University, where he was a visiting professor at Harvard Law School and leader in residence at the Kennedy School of Government. He was president of Reed College in Portland, Ore., from 2012 to 2018, and previously served as Oregon's attorney general. Kroger served as a Marine from 1983 to 1986.

Though the need to ensure an advantage in fighting wars is driving the reforms, Kroger said, the educational opportunities will change how and whom the Navy recruits. It's more challenging to recruit when there's relatively low unemployment,

he said.

The strategy does not specifically say how much the Navy is looking to spend on education or where the money will come from. Kroger said it will rely mostly on existing education funding that can be used in a more cost-effective way. About \$109 million was transferred from other Navy programs this fiscal year to pay for immediate education needs, including startup costs for the community college.

The Navy will ask Congress for more money for education beginning in fiscal year 2022, but the numbers aren't finalized, Kroger said. He estimated it will cost \$40 million to \$50 million annually for the community college, to educate about 40,000 people each year.

There would not be a physical community college campus. Some general education classes would be provided online, but sailors and Marines would do the vast majority of their coursework online through civilian universities and community colleges that partner with the Navy. The Navy plans to seek approval from Congress this year and enroll the first students next year.

For the existing naval schools, the Navy wants to do budgeting for the system as a whole and Kroger will review their curriculum to avoid unnecessary duplication. The schools — the Naval War College in Rhode Island, Marine Corps University in Virginia, Naval Postgraduate School in California and Naval Academy in Maryland — will be expected to align their plans with the strategy.

To encourage service members to pursue educational opportunities, academic achievement will be rewarded by the boards that decide promotions and integrated into fitness reports and evaluations.

When the U.S. entered World War II, nearly all its admirals were Naval War College graduates. Now, less than a quarter of them are because the Navy hasn't stressed education as much, Kroger said.

"It's somewhat of a shift, I think, from ways people think about the effectiveness of the armed forces," he said. "We're not talking here about how fast our jets are, how powerful our missiles are. We're talking about the brainpower of our team."



Lockheed Martin

The Navy christened the USS Cooperstown, its 12th Freedom-variant littoral combat ship, at the Fincantieri Marinette Marine shipyard in Wisconsin, on Saturday. Sixty-four veterans are enshrined in the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown.

New littoral combat ship honors Hall of Fame vets

By CHRISTIAN LOPEZ
Stars and Stripes

The Navy christened its newest littoral combat ship over the weekend, the USS Cooperstown, even as it looks to downsize its inventory of vessels in the same class.

Alba Tull, wife of billionaire film producer Thomas Tull, broke the traditional bottle of sparkling wine across the Cooperstown's bow Saturday at the Fincantieri Marinette Marine shipyard in Wisconsin.

The Cooperstown is the 12th ship of its kind, the Freedom variant, of 16 the Navy contracted with Lockheed Martin to build. Austral USA contracted to build another 19.

The proposed Defense Department spending plan released in February calls for decommissioning the first four littoral combat ships. Two were built at the Fincantieri shipyard and two at Austal's shipyard in Mobile, Ala., according to a Feb. 15 report by Mobile TV station WPML.

The Navy categorized those first four ships as "test articles and training assets," according to WPML.

The Cooperstown is expected to undergo sea trials later this year before going into service. Although the Navy has signaled its intent to curtail acquisition of littorals and build frigates instead, the littoral combat ships have been at work in the Pacific region.

In November, the USS Gabrielle Giffords steamed within 12 miles of Mischief Reef, a low-tide feature in the South China Sea, in a freedom of navigation operation. The Giffords also test-fired a Navy strike missile in October near Guam, the first

demonstration of the missile in the Indo-Pacific region.

The Giffords joined the USS Montgomery, which arrived in the Indo-Pacific region in June.

The 377-foot-long Cooperstown can reach speeds better than 47 knots, or 54 mph. It carries a crew of 50 sailors and one MH-60R/S Seahawk helicopter and one MQ-8 Fire Scout unmanned, autonomous helicopter.

Littoral combat ships are built to be quick and agile and operate near the coast or in open ocean. They conduct anti-submarine warfare, surface warfare and mine countermeasure missions.

Jane Forbes Clark, chairman of the board of directors of The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, in Cooperstown, N.Y., gave the principal address during the christening ceremony. Acting Secretary of the Navy Thomas Modly also spoke.

"The christening of the future USS Cooperstown marks an important step toward this great ship's entry into the fleet," Modly said in a Navy statement. "The dedication and skilled work of everyone involved in the building of this ship has ensured that it will represent the great city of Cooperstown and serve our Navy and Marine Corps team for decades to come."

Cooperstown is the first ship to be named after the city in New York. It received its name during a National Baseball Hall of Fame ceremony on July 25, 2015, honoring the 64 veterans, all members of the Hall, who served from the Civil War to Korean War.

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USAF elite training site to be renamed for Medal of Honor recipient

By CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

The Texas site where elite airman begin their special tactics training is being renamed for Medal of Honor recipient Master Sgt. John A. Chapman, a combat controller killed fighting militants early in the Afghanistan War.

Air Force Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Stephen A. Wilson will be the keynote speaker at a ceremony to rename Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland's Medina Training Annex as Chapman Training Annex on Wednesday. Chapman's family and friends are expected to attend.

Chapman was posthumously awarded



Chapman

Special Tactics Squadron out of then-Pope Air Force Base, N.C. Chapman and a Navy SEAL team went to rescue Petty Officer 1st Class Neil C. Roberts, who had fallen

the military's highest decoration for combat bravery for his actions during the March 2002 Battle of Takur Ghar in Afghanistan. He was the first airman to earn the Medal of Honor since the Vietnam War.

As a technical sergeant with the 24th Special Tactics Squadron out of then-Pope Air Force Base, N.C., Chapman and a Navy SEAL team went to rescue Petty Officer 1st Class Neil C. Roberts, who had fallen

from a helicopter after it took heavy machine gun fire from enemy forces, and was later found dead.

During the battle, which was part of Operation Anaconda, Chapman coordinated AC-130 gunship attacks, stormed a fortified enemy machine gun position and cleared it before moving from cover to assault a second enemy bunker.

An award upgrade from his Air Force Cross came after a lengthy review aided by drone footage of the battle, in which he had been left as dead when the SEALs he was fighting alongside were extracted.

It turned out he was only unconscious, and after coming to — alone, badly wound-

ed and outnumbered — he fought until his death.

The annex's new name will be a reminder of "the service, heroism and ultimate sacrifice" Chapman paid, Col. Parks Hughes, Special Warfare Training Wing commander, said in a statement Monday.

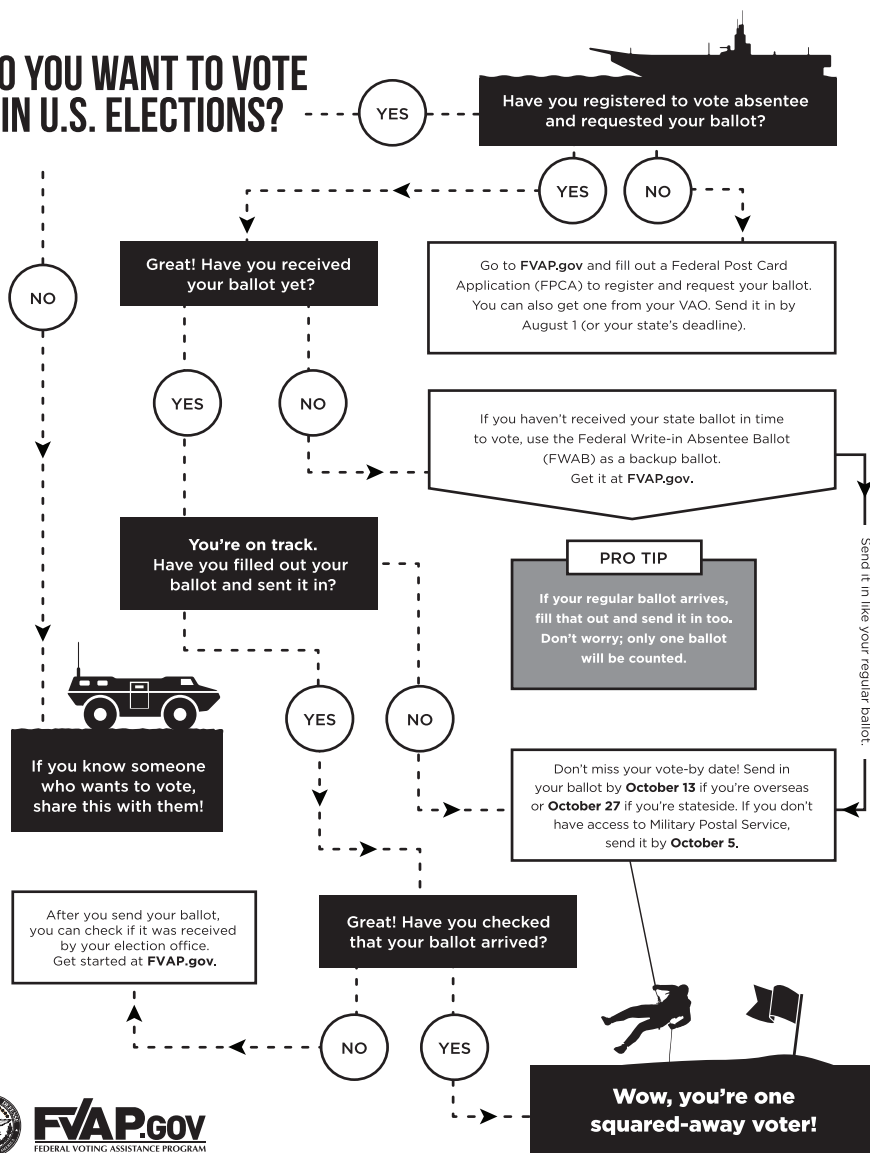
Wednesday's ceremony, which will be streamed live on the U.S. Air Force Facebook page at 10 a.m. Central Standard Time, "pays tribute to an Airman who represents the best of our Air Force, who gave his life fighting to save his teammates," Hughes said.

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So you're stationed overseas and it's an election year...

This handy flowchart on absentee voting lays it all out.

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WAR ON TERRORISM

Afghans to determine post-war landscape

By KATHY GANNON
Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Now that the U.S. has signed a deal with the Taliban to eventually leave Afghanistan, it will soon be up to Afghans on both sides of the conflict to decide what peace will look like.

The stakes are high. The big question for many — and particularly those who remember the religiously repressive Taliban rule that ended with the U.S. invasion in 2001 — is whether the newly emboldened militants have changed their ideology. Women, especially in the cities, worry that their rights will be bargained away.

The Taliban say they have changed. Girls will be allowed to go to school, and women to work.

Women can be judges but not the chief justice; they can participate in politics but not be president, they say.

The Taliban, however, will likely not

back down on segregation of the sexes, said Hakim Mujahed, the Taliban's representative at the United Nations during their five-year rule. They will not accept coeducation nor will they accept women and men working together, he said.

They also say hijab, or a head covering, will be a must, though they won't insist on the all-enveloping burqa, according to Mujahed. The burqa predated the Taliban by decades, particularly in rural Afghanistan, but became a symbol of their repression of women during their rule. It is still worn in much of rural Afghanistan and is seen even in the capital of Kabul.

"Certainly they are not in favor of coeducation. They are not in favor of co-working," said Mujahed, who quietly returned to Kabul after the Taliban was ousted in 2001 and eventually



Afghan civil society activists hold banners with Dari that reads: from left, "We cannot forget the court-martials, Taliban crime in Afghanistan, Taliban group are the factor of destruction and genocide" as they chant slogans against the U.S. agreement with the Taliban on Monday in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Mujahed

joined a government committee tasked with making peace with the Taliban.

"But they are in favor of providing the conditions for education, for work, for economic and political activities for women ... but within the framework of Islamic teachings," said Mujahed, who kept his long unkempt beard and wears the turban. Though the turban is common throughout Afghanistan — not just in Taliban areas — they made it a signature of their rule, requiring all government employees wear one. They also demanded all men wear beards.

In any negotiations, the two sides are expected to hammer out the form of government and constitution.

The current constitution decrees that no laws may contradict Islamic principles — and trying to define that vague term is where issues of women's rights and broader civil rights are likely to come to the fore.

Activists want negotiators to write in guarantees up front that provisions on Islamic principles can't be used to later violate those rights.

Najiba Ayubi, who is director of an organization devoted to women and media development and a strong proponent of free speech, said Afghan women can't rely on Afghan men to fight for their rights. She said women need strong female representation at the table.

"Otherwise, no men will fight with or for us ... because they are not aware what we are facing, and maybe for some of them it is not important what will happen to women," she said.

Afghanistan is conservative and "male-dominated, and men always think women are second-class citizens," Ayubi said, adding it will take years to change.

Ayubi has good reason to fear the Taliban. When they ruled, she was twice beaten for being improperly covered, even as she

walked hidden behind the all-encompassing burqa. Her sisters — one a doctor and the other a judge — were forced to stay home.

Still, she welcomed the chance to bring to an end 40 years of war and said she was confident the Taliban of today were not the Taliban of 2001.

"The Taliban know that this is another time. This is not the Afghanistan of 20 years back," she said.

Today, the country has a thriving social media scene and several media outlets and a data-savvy younger generation that cannot be easily silenced. The Taliban too have a younger generation, who will not be denied their music and their videos, which were banned during their rule.

Still, getting Afghans to agree won't be easy.

Even getting them to the table is proving a formidable task. The deal between the U.S. and Taliban envisioned talks between Afghans on both sides of the conflict

starting March 10, most likely in Oslo. But so far there's no confirmation that important next step will take place.

Washington won't likely wait around. Its withdrawal is not tied to Afghanistan's warring sides figuring out how to talk to each other, let alone coming to an agreement on what peace among them will look like.

According to Saturday's deal, all 13,000 U.S. troops will leave Afghanistan within 14 months if the Taliban meet their obligations to America. Those promises are tied to fighting terrorism, preventing Afghanistan from becoming a safe haven for terrorists, denouncing terrorist groups, severing past links with the likes of al-Qaida and helping fight Islamic State.

The ink had barely dried on the agreement signed Saturday before the sparring began. President Ashraf Ghani seemed to fire the first salvo refusing to release up to 5,000 Taliban prisoners which the agreement said would happen before the start of the so-called intra-Afghan negotiations. The Taliban are to release up to 1,000 Afghan government and military captives.

The releases are intended as a goodwill gesture.

Rehmatullah Nabil, a former head of Afghanistan's spy agency and a candidate in the disputed presidential polls held last September, says there's a lot to do before Afghans from Kabul are ready to sit across the table from the Taliban, and he said the talks should be postponed.

Ghani has yet to unite the country's squabbling politicians under a single banner. Nabil said a unified front is needed to craft an Afghanistan that respects traditions while embracing the young generation, that understands the countryside while encouraging the urban development.

"Imposing (conditions) from outside ... has divided us — between urban and rural, between the traditional and new Afghanistan," he said. "This is important to this time to listen to each other to come up with our own solution."

Two key Republicans push back on US-Taliban peace deal

By STEVE BEYNON
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Sen. Lindsey Graham, one of President Donald Trump's closest allies in Congress, on Monday warned against a quick military exit from Afghanistan and implored that a small contingent of U.S. forces must stay in the country to thwart attacks on the homeland from extremist groups.

"Let's don't do in Afghanistan what [President Barack] Obama did in Iraq — pull the plug on the place and allow radical Islam to come roaring back," the Republican from South Carolina said on the "Fox & Friends" television show. "We're going to need a residual U.S. force for years to come because I don't trust the Taliban to

police al-Qaida and [Islamic State], we need some of our forces in place. That's what Obama failed to do."

Hostilities in Afghanistan quickly resumed Monday, two days after the signing of the U.S.-Taliban deal, which intended to start a 14-month withdrawal of U.S. and allied forces in exchange for the Taliban's halting of its attacks on Western powers and conducting peace talks with the Kabul government.

Trump has long sought to fulfill a key campaign promise of pulling American troops out of Afghanistan. However, Rep. Mac Thornberry of Texas, the top Republican on the House Armed Services Committee, also questioned the deal Monday.

"It is not clear to me what conditions would lead to complete withdrawal in 14

months," Thornberry said at an event at the Brookings Institution, a liberal-leaning Washington think tank. "Who decides whether those conditions have been met?"

The deal calls for 5,000 Taliban prisoners to be released by March 10, in exchange for 1,000 prisoners held in captivity by the Taliban. However, Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani said Sunday that it is Kabul, not the United States, that has the authority to dictate whether or not prisoners are released.

"If this [peace deal] is a withdrawal document, then Afghanistan will fall apart and civil war will emerge," Graham said.

"Women will go back into the darkness, and al-Qaida and ISIS will come forward again to threaten us."

Defense Secretary Mark Esper said a

U.S. drawdown in Afghanistan from about 14,000 troops to about 8,600 will start in the next 10 days. Yet, he also said the United States could back out of withdrawing forces at any time if the Taliban fail to live up to the deal.

"We are going to show good faith and begin withdrawing our troops," Esper said. "And we can stop that at any moment. We can pause it, based on changing circumstances ... We're going to go to 8,600 [troops] and then we're going to stop. We're going to assess the situation, not just tactically on the ground, but are all the parties living up to their obligations and commitments? Are they acting in good faith?"

Stars and Stripes reporters Corey Dickstein and Caitlin Kenney contributed to this report. beynon.steven@stripes.com
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MILITARY

Troop counts could tip congressional balance

By MICHAEL MACAGNONE
CQ-Roll Call

WASHINGTON — The Census Bureau's new system for counting troops deployed abroad could make a difference in states such as North Carolina and Texas, which have sizable military populations and are already poised to gain congressional seats.

Deciding which state gets the last seat in Congress during reapportionment could well come down to a few thousand — or a few hundred — people. And the Census Bureau's new system for counting U.S. troops abroad could make the difference in the count that starts in March.

Federal law mandates the Census Bureau count all U.S. residents, but exactly how the agency counts them can have a major impact on the distribution of about \$1.5 trillion in federal funding as well as 435 seats in Congress.

In years past, the census counted all military members who were serving overseas as residents of whatever home state they listed on their Pentagon paperwork. That's changed for the 2020 count: The Census Bureau will distinguish between military members stationed abroad long term — in Germany or Japan, for example — and personnel deployed temporarily, such as a months-long assignment in Kuwait.

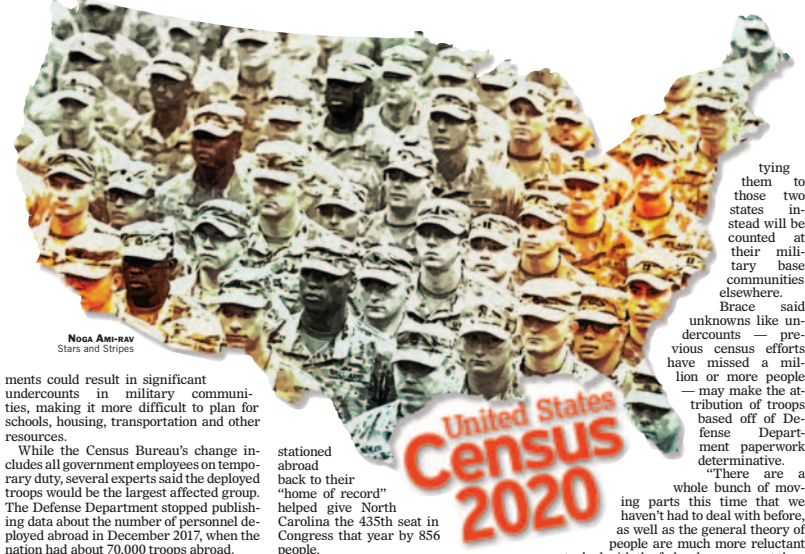
That means a soldier deployed abroad from, say, Fort Bragg, will be counted in North Carolina where the military installation is housed, even if the service member listed Florida as an official residence.

The Census Bureau used to attribute deployed personnel back to their "home of record," which often was Florida, Texas or another state that does not have income taxes. That old counting method may have cost North Carolina a congressional seat in 2010, said Bob Coats, the governor's census liaison at the Office of State Budget and Management.

It also may have lowered the federal funds sent to military areas, and made local planning for things like schools more difficult — even if the change didn't shift congressional seats.

Census Bureau officials made the change in 2018 as it finalized its counting rules and after pressure from North Carolina and other states to count temporarily deployed personnel differently. Proudly, the census counted all troops abroad back to their U.S. "home of record" for apportionment purposes — simply adding them to the total population of a state.

The change for this decade now will add deployed personnel in their community of residence in local census data, not just the total state population. During the rulemaking process for the change, commentators noted that "surges" of deploy-



NOGA ANI-RAV
Stars and Stripes

ments could result in significant undercounts in military communities, making it more difficult to plan for schools, housing, transportation and other resources.

While the Census Bureau's change includes all government employees on temporary duty, several experts said the deployed troops would be the largest affected group. The Defense Department stopped publishing data about the number of personnel deployed abroad in December 2017, when the nation had about 70,000 troops abroad.

The states where the change could have the largest impact are those with the largest military populations: Texas, California and North Carolina. They're also the states expecting a shift in congressional representation.

Reapportionment expert Kim Brace of Election Data Services said the Census Bureau's new method could affect the final count of congressional seats once the dust settles from the 2020 census.

Other population shifts have put several states close to the margin for gaining or losing a congressional seat, including Alabama, California, Florida, North Carolina and Texas. Brace said the new method could be a make-or-break factor for diving up the last few congressional seats.

"There are a whole bunch of different scenarios that we can only guesstimate right now but any one of them are possible," he said.

Decisions about how to count military members have made the difference before, Brace said. The Census Bureau's decision in 2000 to attribute military personnel

stationed abroad back to their "home of record" helped give North Carolina the 435th seat in Congress that year by 856 people.

Utah challenged the Census Bureau's methodology for counting overseas personnel and lost at the Supreme Court.

Then, in 2010, North Carolina missed out on gaining another congressional seat, which Coats partially attributes to the Census Bureau's method for counting deployed personnel. The Defense Department deployed several units from the state to Haiti following the earthquake that year. Those service members were then attributed to their "home of record," rather than to North Carolina communities such as Fort Bragg or Camp Lejeune.

"The local folks know the deployed people are coming back, but they don't have the hard census numbers to prove it," Coats said.

It's unclear whether the new counting method will help Texas or Florida on the whole. While both states have large military populations, many other troops keep their home-of-record there for income tax purposes. That means for the 2020 census, many service members with paperwork

tying them to those two states instead will be counted at their military base communities elsewhere.

Brace said unknowns like undercounting previous census efforts have missed a million or more people — may make the attribution of troops based off of Defense Department paperwork determinative.

"There are a whole bunch of moving parts this time that we haven't had to deal with before, as well as the general theory of people are much more reluctant

to deal with the federal government than they were 10 years ago or 20 years ago," he said.

But other issues lurking in 2020 census preparations may have a larger overall impact on the final distribution of congressional seats, said Beth Jarosz of the Population Reference Bureau.

"Honestly, I think undercount/overcount issues are going to be a bigger deciding factor than this particular piece of residency rule changes," she said.

Jarosz said the Census Bureau's new approach may have a larger impact on the flow of federal funds and planning for local communities.

She pointed out that communities with a significant Navy presence, such as Coronado, Calif., lose 10,000 or more people when a carrier group sets out to sea. But those people will now be counted back to where they actually live rather than what's listed on their Pentagon paperwork.

"If 12,000 people are gone for six months but coming right back, you are still going to need schools and roads and resources," Jarosz said.

Nomination of official who had Ukraine concerns pulled

By MYSIE RYAN
The Washington Post

The White House on Monday pulled the nomination of a Pentagon official to a joint committee because of concerns she raised about withholding military aid for Ukraine.

In a statement, the White House said it had withdrawn the nomination of Elaine McCusker as Pentagon comptroller, a position she has held on an acting basis. It provided no reason why McCusker, a career civil servant who was

nominated to be confirmed in the job in November, would no longer be considered.

The decision is likely to deepen concerns about whether the Trump administration is singling out officials seen as playing a role unfavorable to the president in matters related to his impeachment. It follows the departure last month of John Rood, a top policy official who likewise was a leading figure in the Pentagon's response to the delay of security aid to Ukraine, an issue that be-

came central to the impeachment proceedings against President Donald Trump.

The president was acquitted of impeachment charges during a Senate vote in February. The trial stemmed from Democrats' assertions that the president had improperly withheld more than \$300 million in assistance to Ukraine to force the country's government to conduct an investigation into former vice president Joe Biden, a top political rival, and his son.

Emails made public in recent

months show that McCusker voiced concerns to White House budget officials last year about the delay in delivering congressional approved aid to Ukraine.

Other individuals who were pushed out of their positions after providing testimony critical of the president's version of events include Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, who served as a White House national security official for Ukraine matters, and Gordon Sondland, the former ambassador to the European Union.

The Defense Department did not provide an immediate comment.

Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I., the ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, called McCusker "another casualty of the Trump Administration's efforts to purge public servants who put country before fealty to the President."

"Ms. McCusker is paying the price for trying to ensure that the Administration followed the law," Reed said in a statement.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

US Fed cuts rates as virus moves West

By LORI HINNANT
AND KEN MORITSUGU
Associated Press

PARIS — The coronavirus crisis shifted increasingly westward toward Europe and the United States on Tuesday, with governments taking emergency steps to ease shortages of face masks for front-line doctors and nurses and the U.S. Federal Reserve announcing the biggest interest-rate cut in over a decade to fend off damage to the economy.

The virus reached deep into Iran's government, where 23 members of Parliament and the head of the country's emergency services were reported infected. South Korea started drive-thru testing. The French government announced it would requisition supplies of protective masks, while the U.S. relaxed restrictions on the kind of masks American health care workers can use.

In Spain's Basque region, where at least five doctors and nurses were newly infected, nearly 100 health care workers were being held in isolation and at least 120 were being monitored.

"We are concerned that countries' abilities to respond are being compromised by the severe and increasing disruption to the global supply of personal protective equipment, caused by rising demand, hoarding and misuse," said the World Health Organization's director-general, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. "We can't stop COVID-19 without protecting our health workers."

The mushrooming outbreaks contrasted with optimism in China, where thousands of recovered patients were going home and the number of new infections dropped to the lowest level in several weeks.

Virus clusters in the United States led schools and subways to sanitize, quickened the search for a vaccine and spread fears

among nursing home residents, who are especially vulnerable.

On Wall Street, stocks jumped after the Federal Reserve announced the emergency rate cut. Fed Chairman Jerome Powell said the virus "will surely weigh on economic activity both here and abroad for some time." Other Group of Seven countries appeared more reluctant to follow suit, probably because many of their interest rates are already near or below zero.

The U.S. count of COVID-19 cases topped 100, spread across at least 11 states. Six people have died, all in Washington state.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration gave health care workers the OK to use an industrial type of respirator mask often used to protect construction workers from dust and debris. The masks, which have a close fit and filter out 95% of particles, are also frequently used to stop the spread of bacteria in hospitals and operating rooms.

Iran's supreme leader ordered the military to assist health officials in fighting the virus, which authorities said has killed 77 people — the deadliest outbreak outside China. Among the dead are a confidant of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's former ambassador to the Vatican and a recently elected member of Parliament.

France's president announced the government will take control of current and future stocks of face masks to ensure they could go to health workers and coronavirus patients, and the finance minister warned that binge-shopping for household essentials could trigger shortages.

South Korea saw its largest daily increase in new cases Tuesday, with 851 more infections reported, largely in and around the southeastern city of Daegu. In all, 5,186 in South Korea have tested positive for the virus.

In the capital of Seoul, drive-thru virus



CLAUDIO FURLAN, L'ESPRESSO/AP

Italian paramilitary police patrols at former military hospital Baggio in Milan, Italy, on Tuesday. The number of infected people in Italy rose to 2,036 with 52 dead.

testing centers began operating, with workers dressed head-to-toe in white protective suits leaning into cars with mouth swabs, a move meant to limit contact with possible carriers of the illness. Troops were also dispatched across the city to spray streets and alleys with disinfectant.

Worldwide, more than 92,000 people have been sickened and 3,100 have died. The number of countries hit by the virus has reached at least 70, with Ukraine and Morocco reporting their first cases. More than half of those infected have recovered from the illness already.

In China, the count of new cases dropped again Tuesday, with just 125 reported. It is still by far the hardest-hit country, with over 80,000 infections and about 95% of the world's deaths.

China's ambassador to the United Nations said the country is winning its battle against COVID-19.

"We are not far from the coming of the victory," Zhang Jun said.

The count of infected people in Italy

climbed to 2,036 with 52 dead, and officials said it could take up to two weeks to know whether measures including quarantines in 11 northern towns are working.

In the U.S., Capitol Hill aides said negotiations are nearing completion on an emergency bill to fund the development of a vaccine and offer disaster loans to businesses hurt by the crisis.

Surgeon General Jerome Adams, a leading public health official in the U.S., urged calm: "Caution, preparedness, but not panic."

In Japan, questions continued to build about the fate of the Olympics.

The country's Olympic minister, Seiko Hashimoto, said Japan is "making the utmost effort" to proceed with the games' opening July 24 in Tokyo. But she told parliament that the country's contract with the International Olympic Committee specifies only that the games be held in 2020, meaning they could be postponed to later in the year if necessary.

Troops return to Italy after Israeli exercise canceled

By NANCY MONTGOMERY
Stars and Stripes

VICENZA, Italy — About 60 U.S. paratroopers who traveled to Israel returned abruptly to their base in Italy last week after Israeli measures to contain the new coronavirus forced an exercise to be canceled.

The troops were among 300 U.S. Army paratroopers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade planning to participate in the exercise Eagle Genesis with Israeli Defense Forces ground troops this month.

The decision aligned with Israeli travel restrictions and was "purely a precautionary measure," Lt. Col. Joe Hontz, a U.S. European Command spokesman, said in an email.

"In close coordination with the Israeli government and out of an abundance of caution in the face of the evolving situation with COVID-19, the decision has been made to cancel the exercise," Hontz said. "We value our strong partnership with Israel and look



AARON SMITH/U.S. Army

A soldier with the Vicenza, Italy-based 173rd Airborne Brigade and an Israeli soldier practice hand-to-hand combat in 2019 in Israel. Vicenza-based troops returned to Italy after an exercise in Israel was canceled due to coronavirus-related travel restrictions.

forward to continuing training together in the future."

Meanwhile, EUCOM announced Tuesday that the biennial

U.S.-Israel ballistic missile defense exercise Juniper Cobra had begun. The exercise includes more than 600 U.S. troops at spots

throughout Israel. It was unclear Tuesday if any of those troops were based in Italy.

No U.S. troops in Europe have been diagnosed with COVID-19, the disease caused by the new coronavirus. A soldier in South Korea is the only service member known to have contracted the virus, though some military dependents in South Korea and Japan have also tested positive.

Israel is one of several countries to restrict travelers from Italy, where thousands of U.S. service members, civilian workers and family members live. U.S. Army Garrison Italy is currently setting up "restricted movement" barracks and collecting data on troops and families scheduled to report there in the next few months.

Permanent changes of station, including from countries like South Korea with high numbers of coronavirus cases, have continued normally, officials said this week.

That could possibly change as the Defense Department evalu-

ates conditions in areas the State Department has issued travel warnings, such as the Veneto region, which includes U.S. Army Garrison Italy headquarters.

Military officials have said that operations have been minimally affected by the coronavirus, which has infected nearly 90,000 people worldwide and killed more than 3,000, according to World Health Organization figures released Monday.

The Italian government reported more than 2,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 52 deaths Tuesday.

Countries within the European Union, which has open borders, have not restricted travelers from Italy.

But Poland is requiring airline passengers and crew from countries with large numbers of coronavirus cases, including Italy, to complete a health form at points of entry.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

S. Korea declares 'war' on COVID-19

By KIM GAMEL
AND YOO KYONG CHANG
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korean President Moon Jae-in declared "war" on the new coronavirus Tuesday as the number of infections crept toward 5,000, most in a southeastern area that is home to a U.S. military base.

The South has suffered from the largest COVID-19 outbreak outside China, where the virus first appeared in December, then spread to dozens of other countries, killing more than 3,000 people.

Moon said he planned to spend \$25 billion on fighting the virus, which has been mainly concentrated in the southeastern city of Daegu and surrounding areas. He also put all government agencies on 24-hour alert, saying the recent spike in cases marked a "critical phase."

"The crisis in Daegu and North Gyeongsang province reached its peak and the whole country has entered a war against the infectious disease," Moon said during a weekly Cabinet meeting.

"Now that economic sentiment has frozen, investment, consumption and industrial activities have shrunk considerably," he added. "The government should make an all-force response to mitigate economic shock. Bold fiscal injection is urgent."

Moon's remarks came as the Korea Centers for Disease Control raised the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the country to 4,812, with 28 deaths. It said 85,484 of 125,851 people tested negative.

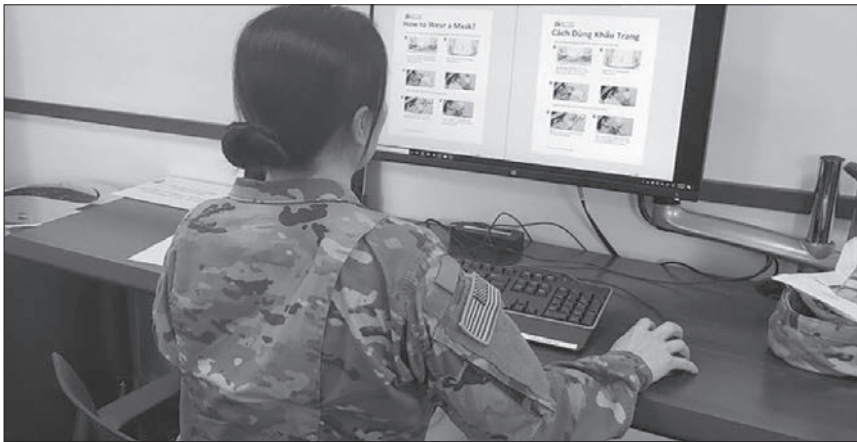
Health authorities have warned the numbers will continue to rise as tests are completed on members of a religious sect believed to be at the center of the Daegu outbreak.

South Korean officials planned to expand coronavirus tests on ordinary citizens in Daegu after completing those on members of the Shincheonji Church of Jesus amid fears of community transmission. Vice Health Minister Kim Gang-il told reporters on Tuesday.

The government also will set up more isolation facilities in Daegu, which has a population of 2.5 million, by early next week, he added.

The virus, which has symptoms similar to the flu or the common cold, is believed to have an incubation period of two weeks and is spread through contact. Authorities have urged people to practice good hygiene, wash their hands frequently and thoroughly, and avoid sick people or stay at home if they are sick.

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Joint Force Headquarters

A Guardsman conducts translation work on a safety message regarding the best practices for avoiding the coronavirus for the Washington Department of Health last month at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash. The base is about 50 miles from an outbreak zone near Seattle.

Virus: Army medical labs, HHS working on a vaccine

FROM FRONT PAGE

The two sick soldiers were eventually cleared as their symptoms were linked to food poisoning or air sickness, and the flight departed South Korea, according to Fort Hood officials.

Medical teams screen soldiers' health based on U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines before they leave South Korea, during a layover in Alaska and once they arrive at Fort Hood, said Lt. Col. Steven Lamb, a spokesman for III Corps, which commands Fort Hood. Then they can go home.

The soldiers were already considered low risk for contracting the virus, because they were stationed at Camps Casey and Humphreys in the northern region of South Korea. The virus has predominately been within the vicinity of Daegu, in the southern region of the Korean Peninsula.

Final flights home for Fort Hood troops are expected this week and "the command teams are ensuring soldiers understand not only the symptoms of the virus and how to seek help if necessary, but also that they follow basic mitigation strategies to prevent the spread of any illness," Lamb said.

The 1st Infantry Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team has already left Fort Riley, Kan., for South Korea to replace the Fort Hood troops on the rotational deployment.

"We're also working to inform our soldiers and families about prevention measures. We will continue to evaluate current day-to-day operations to ensure the safety of all of our soldiers, family members and civilian personnel," Lt. Col. Terence Kelley, a division spokesman, said in a statement.

All soldiers arriving at Fort Riley, whether from high-risk areas or newly assigned to the

base, are receiving in-person medical screening based on CDC guidelines within two hours.

So far, there are more than 100 reported cases of coronavirus in 11 states. The Associated Press reported of the respiratory disease that first took hold in China and began spreading to dozens of countries across the globe. While none of the U.S. cases have occurred within the military community, the six reported U.S. deaths from coronavirus occurred in Washington state about 50 miles north of Joint Base Lewis-McChord.

At that base, officials have canceled some large-scale gatherings, Milley said.

"We're relying on local commanders to make decisions that are unique to their situation, because each one is different with regard to impact to the community," Esper said. "What I'm prepared to do is resource them as needed."

To better inform base residents about the virus, I Corps, which commands Lewis-McChord, will host a virtual town hall this week, said Lt. Col. Chris Hyde, I Corps spokesman.

"Leaders at JBLM will continue to monitor events associated with [the coronavirus] and will take all prudent measures necessary to ensure the safety of our service members, civilian employees and their families," he said.

The major threat of the virus to military members remains overseas, primarily in Japan, northern Italy and South Korea, where regional commanders have limited access to military bases and restricted nonessential travel for troops. In South Korea, some large-scale training exercises also were canceled, Milley said.

While military units around the world take defensive measures against the spread of the illness,

medical labs for the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases and the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, at Fort Detrick, Md., are coordinating with the Department of Health and Human Services to create a vaccine for the virus. In the past, these labs have joined efforts to combat emerging infectious disease outbreaks such as Ebola, MERS and Zika.

Some House lawmakers also began weighing in Monday on the military's role in mitigating a stateside coronavirus outbreak. Rep. Ruben Gallego, D-Ariz., who is a member of the House Armed Services Committee, requested a briefing from the Pentagon on its response to the virus.

"As you are aware, this outbreak is already affecting our readiness abroad, and appears likely to affect the homeland in a significant way," he wrote in a letter to Robert G. Salesses, deputy assistant secretary for homeland and defense integration and the Defense Security Cooperation Agency.

Rep. Mark Thornberry, of Texas, the ranking Republican on the House Armed Services Committee, said Monday that he has concerns with the military's ability to handle an outbreak at military bases at home and overseas.

"The military should have a seat at the table, but it's not going to be primarily up to the military to contain it," he said, speaking at the Brookings Institution, a liberal-leaning Washington think tank.

As with the spread of Ebola, which began in 2014, Thornberry said the military showed it has unique capabilities that sometimes have to be brought in to contain a dangerous biological element.

"That does not mean that the military should be on the front

lines," he said. "One of my concerns is over the years, other elements of government have somewhat atrophied in a way so that we all automatically turn to the military to go solve problems, and I think we put them in a hard place."

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NATION

Tornadoes: Storm tore through areas that saw a building boom

FROM FRONT PAGE

The death toll jumped to 22 Tuesday as first responders gingerly pulled apart the wreckage, hoping to find people alive in the rubble of their homes. Putnam Sheriff Eddie Farris said only 30% of the disaster area had a "hard check" by midday. "A lot of these homes had basements and we're hopeful there are still people down in there," he said.

Nashville residents walked around in dismay as emergency crews closed off roads. Roofs had been torn off apartment buildings, large trees uprooted and debris littered many sidewalks. Walls were peeled away, exposing living rooms and kitchens in damaged homes. Mangled power lines and broken trees came to rest on cars, streets and piles of rubble.

"It is heartbreaking. We have had loss of life all across the state," said Gov. Bill Lee. He ordered nonessential state workers to stay home just before he was set to fly in a helicopter to survey damage.

President Donald Trump announced plans to visit the disaster area on Friday. "We send our love and our prayers of the nation to every family that was affected," he said. "We will get there, and we will recover, and we will rebuild, and we will help them."

The tornadoes were spared by a stretch of storm tracks that skirted from Alabama into western Pennsylvania.

In Nashville, the twister's path was mostly north and east of the heart of downtown, sparing many of its biggest tourism draws — the honky tonks of Broadway, the Grand Ole Opry House, the storied Ryman Auditorium, and the convention center.

Instead the storm tore through areas transformed by a recent building boom. Germantown and East Nashville are two of the city's trendiest neighborhoods, with restaurants, music venues, high-end apartment complexes and rising home prices threatening to drive out longtime residents.

"The dogs started barking before the sirens went off, they knew what was coming," said Paula Wade, of East Nashville. "Then we heard the roar. ... Something



PHOTOS BY MARK HUMPHREY/AP

Sumant Joshi helps to clean up rubble at East End United Methodist Church after it was heavily damaged by storms Tuesday in Nashville, Tenn. Joshi is a resident in the area and volunteered to help clean up.

made me just sit straight up in bed, and something came through the window right above my head. If I hadn't moved, I would've gotten a face full of glass."

Then she looked across the street and saw the damage at East End United Methodist Church.

"It's this beautiful Richardson Romanesque church; the bell tower is gone, the triptych window of Jesus the Good Shepherd that they just restored and put back up a few weeks ago is gone," she said.

Wade immediately recalled how a tornado damaged her own St. Ann's Episcopal Church down the street in 1998.

"I had no idea that I still had some PTSD from that other experience so long ago, but the sound of the sirens, that low sound, there's just nothing like it," she said. "To look out and see the church, it's just heartbreaking. It brings out

everything that happened to St. Ann's."

The roof came crashing down on Ronald Baldwin and Harry Nahay in a bedroom of the one-story brick home they share in East Nashville. "We couldn't get out," said Baldwin. "And so I just kept kicking and kicking until we finally made a hole."

Also in East Nashville, the roaring wind woke Evan and Charlie Peters, but they had no time to reach the relative safety of an interior bathroom. "Within about 10 seconds, the house started shaking," Charlie Peters said. "I jumped on top of the ground; he jumped on top of me. The ceiling landed on top of him. ... We're grateful to be alive."

Metro Nashville police said crews were responding to about 40 building collapses in their area. Putnam authorities said an aerial tour revealed more

than 100 structures destroyed or damaged.

With more than a dozen Super Tuesday locations in Nashville's Davidson County damaged, voters were sent to other locations, some of them with long lines. Tennessee's Secretary of State delayed opening polls in the disaster area for an hour, but said they would close as scheduled Tuesday night.

"Anyone that wants to vote, we want to create an opportunity for you," Davidson County elections administrator Jeff Roberts said. Because poll workers will be navigating through a damaged city to deliver results Tuesday night, he said the tallying may take longer than anticipated.

A reported gas leak forced an evacuation of the IMT building in Germantown, according to WSMV-TV. Dozens of people, suddenly homeless, were seen car-



Debbie Jones, right, wipes tears as she views the damage to the church Tuesday. Jones attended the church as a child.

rying their belongings through garbage-strewn streets after the tornado blew through.

Schools were closed in Nashville and beyond. Nashville Electric tweeted that four of its substations were damaged in the tornado. More than 44,000 customers lost power early Tuesday, the utility company said.

The tornado blew down a major Tennessee Valley Authority transmission line in Putnam County, and also damaged gas lines, water mains and cellphone towers, making the recovery much more difficult, authorities said.

Hundreds of people went to a Red Cross shelter for displaced residents at the Nashville Farmers Market, just north of the state capitol, but a power outage there forced them to move again to the Centennial Sportsplex.

The storm system left just scattered rain in its wake as it moved eastward. Strong cells capable of causing damage were spotted in central Alabama, eastern Tennessee and the western Carolinas.

Sheriff says 8 deputies took Bryant crash photos

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Los Angeles County Sheriff Alex Villanueva said eight deputies allegedly took or shared graphic photos of the Kobe Bryant helicopter crash scene, but he ordered them deleted.

"That was my No. 1 priority, was to make sure those photos no longer exist," Villanueva told NBC News for a story Monday. "We identified the deputies involved, they came to the station on their own and had admitted they had taken them and they had deleted them. And we're content that those involved did that."

The sheriff said he learned the week of that as many as eight deputies may have been involved.

"We've communicated in no uncertain terms that the behavior is inexcusable," Villanueva said. "I mean, people are grieving for the loss of their loved ones. To have that on top of what they've already gone through is unconscionable."

Villanueva said the Sheriff's Department doesn't have a specific policy about taking photographs on personal cellphones. But he plans to change that situation and would like to see a state law making it illegal to take unauthorized photos of accident scenes depicting dead bodies.

Villanueva told KABC-TV that the deputies are facing an investigation and possible disciplinary action. He wouldn't specify the kind of actions they might face.

The Sheriff's Department has a policy against taking and sharing crime scene photos, but it doesn't apply to accident scenes, the sheriff told KBCS-TV.

Bryant, his daughter and seven others died on Jan. 26 when their helicopter crashed into a hillside in Calabasas, northwest of Los Angeles, during cloudy weather. The victims were traveling to a youth basketball tournament at Bryant's sports facility in Thousand Oaks.

The crash remains under investigation by the National Transportation Safety Board.

The Los Angeles Times reported last week that a public safety source with knowledge of the events had seen one of

the photos on the phone of another official in a setting that was not related to the investigation of the crash. He said the photos showed the scene and victims' remains.

Only the county coroner's office and the NTSB were authorized to take photographs of the crash scene. After dealing with grieving family members, "it's just a sense of betrayal" to learn that other photos were taken, the sheriff told KABC-TV, describing it as "a punch to the gut."

Bryant's widow, Vanessa Bryant, was "absolutely devastated" by the reports of unauthorized crash scene photos being shared, her lawyer said last week.

Villanueva told KABC-TV that he has apologized to the families.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man accused of openly wielding BB gun at bar

DE REHOBOTH BEACH — Police in Delaware arrested a man accused of entering a bar and pointing a BB gun made to look like a handgun at people gathered inside, authorities confirmed.

Patrons and workers at a Rehoboth Beach bar reported that an agitated man had grabbed an employee and pointed a gun at others inside the establishment, the city's police department said in a statement.

An officer saw the suspect walking down the road afterward, then spotted him stashing what appeared to be a gun inside a tree, the police statement said. Officers found the weapon and determined that it was a BB gun made to look like a .40-caliber handgun.

Bryan P. Meck, 28, was charged with three counts of felony aggravated menacing, carrying a concealed dangerous instrument, offensive touching and disorderly conduct.

Once declared dead, man appeals execution

LA NEW ORLEANS — Lawyers for a man who had been declared legally dead before he was found, arrested and convicted in the slaying of a 12-year-old girl are set to ask an appeals court to overturn his federal conviction and death sentence.

Thomas Steven Sanders went missing after he left his Mississippi family in 1987 and had been declared legally dead in 1994.

But he was found alive and arrested in Gulfport, Miss., as the result of an investigation into the 2010 death of a woman in Arizona — and the kidnapping and killing of her daughter in Louisiana.

A federal jury in Louisiana convicted him and sentenced him to death for the kidnapping and killing of the girl, Lexis Roberts.

Officials answer call for battlefield park repairs

MS VICKSBURG — The mayor of Vicksburg said federal officials are responding to his call for attention to road and erosion damage that has closed nearly a third of Vicksburg's National Military Park after a winter of heavy rains.

The Vicksburg Post reported that a National Park Service incident management team is expected to be at the park to stabilize some areas and make plans for more permanent repairs.

The park is the site of one of the Civil War's most significant battles and a linchpin of tourism in Vicksburg.

Pilot struck by his own airplane propeller

DE NEW CASTLE — A Delaware man was injured after he was hit in the head by his single-engine airplane's propeller, state Port Authority officials confirmed.

First responders were called



GREG WOHLFORD, ERIE (Pa.) TIMES-NEWS/AP

Cold opening

From left, Don Borkowski, his wife, Cynde, their daughter, Laurel Reichel, 32, and Reichel's 2-month-old son, Declan, check out the jaguar Saturday at the Erie Zoo on the Pennsylvania zoo's opening day.

to the New Castle Airport where they found the Wilmington pilot unresponsive, Delaware Bay Port Authority officials told news outlets. Investigators determined that the man had gotten out of his plane to start it manually when the propeller hit him in the head, according to Port Authority.

The man was taken to a hospital, but authorities haven't given an update on his condition. The Delaware News Journal reported.

Police: Girl lied about fake officer assault

AL OPELIKA — Police in east Alabama said that a teenage girl was lying when she claimed a man impersonating a police officer sexually assaulted her.

The Opelika Police Department told WTVM-TV that detectives recreated the incident, which was reported Feb. 19. They said that once the teen who claimed the assault was confronted with surveillance video from multiple sources, she admitted that she was lying.

Police say they're continuing to investigate, now focusing on the false report. No criminal charges have yet been filed.

2 arrested in fraudulent stolen checks scheme

AZ SIERRA VISTA — Cochise County Sheriff's officials said that two suspects were arrested in connection

THE CENSUS

\$10M

CSUF's Center for Gravitational-Wave Physics and Astronomy Center. Instead of a check, he is handing over he and his wife's collection of 15 post-war European sports cars that will be sold.

with a fraudulent scheme involving stolen checks. They said that checks were stolen from an automotive group in Sierra Vista and then forged and cashed at various banks.

A search warrant was issued for a Bisbee residence and a vehicle. Sheriff's officials said that checks cashed before the search warrant totaled over \$3,000. There also were more than 30 uncashed checks that were recovered.

Authorities said that Gloria Burton, 52, and her son Charles, 31, were booked into the county jail on suspicion of theft, fraud, forgery and conspiracy.

Sheriff's officials said that Gloria Burton was an employee of the automotive group.

Car pins sleeping man to wall in his home

CA RIVERSIDE — A man sleeping in his bedroom was pinned against a wall when a car smashed through the house in Southern California, authorities said.

The man suffered only minor

The amount of money a 98-year-old retired engineering executive donated to California State University, Fullerton, that he hopes will help expose students to the "absolute wonders" of science. The gift from Nicholas Begovich will go to

injuries after the vehicle barreled over a power pole, through two yards and into the home in River-side, fire officials said.

The car almost completely entered the structure, rendering it uninhabitable, the Press-Enterprise reported. Firefighters used the Jaws of Life, a tool normally employed to cut open smashed vehicles, to free the man.

Police arrested the driver of the car, a 22-year-old man. He could face charges including driving under the influence of alcohol causing injury and DUI with a blood-alcohol level higher than 0.08 causing injury, both felonies, the newspaper said.

'Eekameek' found after 2-year manhunt

FL PORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — A fugitive sought in a Florida slaying was captured after a two-year manhunt.

Court records showed that Terrance Bernard Warnich Jr., 29, was jailed on a first-degree murder charge. Warner and a second man are accused in the fatal

shooting of Clifton Afflick-Laidley, 31, outside a Broward County restaurant in 2018.

The South Florida Sun-Sentinel reported that police said Warner and Jimard Mitchard Fox, 29, had been arguing with Afflick-Laidley in the parking lot of the Fabulous Southern Cooking Restaurant before the shooting occurred.

Authorities said that one reason it took so long to find Warner was that witnesses only knew him by his nickname, "Eekameek."

Mormon crickets reported early this year

NV RENO — Mormon crickets, the grasshopper-like insects that pose threats to crops and drivers, are hatching early this year in northern Nevada.

KRVN-TV reported that the Nevada Department of Agriculture has confirmed some of the earliest hatchings of Mormon crickets in years, with the first reported Feb. 22 in Winnemucca, which is 148 miles northeast of Reno.

Mormon crickets pose a safety threat to drivers because they get squished and make roads slick.

Off the roads, outbreaks levels of Mormon crickets can devastate farmers' crops.

Night recommends that home owners put up a fence that guides crickets around a home. The crickets are named after Mormon pioneers whose forage and grain fields were devoured by the insects.

From wire reports

NATION

DA apologizes for husband's act on demonstrators

By STEFANIE DAZIO
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The husband of the first black woman to lead the country's largest local prosecutor's office pointed a gun and said "I will shoot you" to Black Lives Matter members demonstrating outside the couple's home before dawn Monday, prompting an apology from his wife on the eve of her primary election.

In an emotional press conference, Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey said that she and her husband, David, were awakened and frightened by the demonstration that occurred before 6 a.m. She said he ran downstairs, where she heard him talking to someone, and that when he returned he said there were protesters.

She said he told her: "I pulled my gun, and I asked them to leave."

The encounter came ahead of a Tuesday primary election in which Lacey is seeking a third

term. She has clashed repeatedly with Black Lives Matter protesters, who say that she is too protective of law enforcement and doesn't prosecute officers in fatal shootings.

Black Lives Matter organizers spurned Lacey's apology during a separate news conference. They said they were "traumatized."

"She didn't apologize to us," Melina Abdullah said. "And an apology isn't enough. We need her to change. We need her to be accountable or she can retire."

In a video posted by Abdullah, David Lacey pointed a gun and said, "Get off. Get off of my porch."

He was an investigative auditor with the DA's office until his 2016 retirement.

"His response was in fear, and now that he realizes what happened, he wanted me to say to the protesters, the person that he showed the gun to, that he was sorry, that he was profoundly sorry," the prosecutor said. She also said that she was sorry.

Lacey said that she has received death threats and has been followed, photographed and confronted repeatedly. She said that she expects people to exercise their First Amendment rights, "but our home is our sanctuary."



DAHLIA FERLITO/AP



DAVID CRANE, THE ORANGE COUNTY (CALIF.) REGISTER/AP

Los Angeles District Attorney Jackie Lacey, who is seeking reelection to her post, apologized Monday after her husband, David, left, pulled a gun on protesters who knocked on the door of their home before 6 a.m. on Monday.

But Black Lives Matter organizers said Lacey has refused to meet with them and has never extended such invitations. They said Lacey would not meet with them publicly, so they claimed they were forced to go to her home.

They set up chairs on the sidewalk and three members rang her doorbell, Abdullah said.

"We heard what sounded like a gun being cocked," she said. "I don't know how I mustered the words to say 'good morning' but I did."

She said David Lacey pointed the gun "inches" from her chest.

Detectives are investigating a "possible assault with a deadly weapon," the LAPD said in a statement.

Lacey's office said that the case

could be brought to an independent prosecutor's office, and the state attorney general's office is assisting the LAPD.

In the video, Abdullah says off-camera: "Good morning. Are you going to shoot me?"

The man says, "I will shoot you. Get off of my porch."

Abdullah responds: "Can you tell Jackie Lacey that we're here?"

The man says: "I don't care who you are, get off of my porch right now. We're calling the police right now."

Police were called to the home after being told that roughly 50 protesters were outside. There were no arrests.

Court considers constitutionality of male-only draft

By KEVIN MCGILL
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Weeks before a government commission weighs in on the subject, federal appeals court judges will consider whether the military's all-male draft system is constitutional or not.

A Texas-based federal judge ruled last year that it is not, in re-

sponse to a lawsuit brought by the National Coalition for Men. The government appealed, leading to Tuesday's hearing before a three-judge panel of the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

The case is one of three being argued before the panel at Tulane University's law school in New Orleans. The court holds hearings at Tulane once a year.

The United States government

stopped drafting young men into the military in 1973. But every male must still register for the draft when he turns 18.

The Supreme Court upheld the male-only draft in 1981, at a time when women were not yet eligible for combat roles. Women first became eligible in 2015, and U.S. District Judge Gray Miller cited that change in his ruling last year.

It's not clear when the appeals court panel will rule. The hearing takes place about three weeks before a federal commission is scheduled to release a final report and recommendations on the draft — including whether the nation still needs a draft registration system, whether women should be required to register and whether other changes are needed.

The commission's chairman, former Republican U.S. Rep. Joe Heck of Nevada, has publicly supported requiring women to register for the draft.

"The Commission has been following this case as it progresses, making our work all the more relevant and important," Heck said in an emailed statement Monday. The commission is scheduled to release its report on March 25.

Prosecutor: Ex-convict was in bed with victim when arrested

By LARRY NEUMEISTER
Associated Press

NEW YORK — An ex-convict accused of forcing young women he met in his daughter's dormitory into prostitution or forced labor after winning their trust was in bed with a victim when he was arrested, a prosecutor said Monday as the New Jersey man lost a bid to be freed on bail.

The detail of Lawrence Ray's arrest was revealed by Assistant U.S. Attorney Danielle Sassoon as she argued against bail in Manhattan federal court. A defense lawyer argued that the charges stemmed from events long ago and that her client can't wait to contest the charges.

A woman he described as his wife was one of the victims, the

prosecutor said, and they lived in a residence in which Ray kept a lock on the refrigerator door, regularly restricting their access to food.

Recovery for the victims will probably be a long ordeal, the prosecutor said.

Ray, once convicted of securities fraud, had a history of failing to obey court orders, tampering with witnesses, had jumped bail once before and had used his daughter as a human shield as U.S. marshals arrested him years ago, Sassoon said.

Ray, 60, of Piscataway, N.J., pocketed over \$1.7 million in 2017 and 2018 from the proceeds of a victim who worked as a prostitute, Sassoon said. And, she said, he had the money to flee because he claimed his offshore internet do-



Lawrence Ray

main-business was worth millions of dollars.

Ray was arrested last month on charges that alleged he used "physical, sexual

and psychological abuse" to extort money from five different students at Sarah Lawrence College, a private liberal arts college outside New York City.

Authorities said that he convinced them they were indebted to him, subjecting them to grueling, hours-long interrogations that included sexual exploitation and humiliation as he deprived

them of food and sleep.

"He essentially broke their spirit," Sassoon said.

Two of the female victims were living with Ray when he was arrested, and one woman was in bed with him at the time, the prosecutor said.

Ray "sexually groomed" one woman, getting her to engage in sex with various men while he filmed the encounters, Sassoon said. He had sex with multiple victims himself, she said.

Meanwhile, he tried to shield himself from investigators by keeping cash in bank accounts under the names of his victims or in a backpack he carried around, Sassoon said.

Ray is charged with sex trafficking, forced prostitution. If convicted, he could face a minimum of

15 years in prison on the sex trafficking charge alone, she said.

Ray's defense lawyer, Assistant Federal Defender Marne Lenox, asked Magistrate Judge Kevin Nathaniel Fox to release her client to house arrest on a \$100,000 bail on the sex trafficking and extortion charges.

Much of the evidence, Lenox said, relates to events from over a decade ago after he went through a nasty divorce or stem from two alleged victims — one with a troubled past, including problems with drugs, and another who has already signed a book deal to profit from the story.

"He wants to fight these charges and tell his side of the story," Lenox said of Ray. "The last thing Mr. Ray wants to do is run away from this."

WORLD

Netanyahu's party ahead but short of majority in Israel vote

BY ARON HELLER
Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Israel's embattled Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faced an uncertain path to staying in office Tuesday, even as preliminary results showed his Likud party pulling ahead of its opponents in the country's third election in less than a year.

Exit polls on Israeli TV stations showed Likud and its allies capturing 59 seats out of the 120 in parliament. That would still put Likud and its ultra-religious and nationalist bloc short of the parliamentary majority required to form a government.

With roughly 90% of votes already counted, Netanyahu's bloc looked to be maintaining its lead. Final results were expected to be announced later Tuesday and could swing Netanyahu over the top — two weeks before he goes on

trial to face corruption charges.

But if the official results match the exit polls, and Netanyahu's camp is unable to draw in defectors from the opposing camp, Israel's prolonged political gridlock could continue with the prospect of a fourth election.

The uncertainty didn't stop Netanyahu from declaring victory early Tuesday in front of a raucous crowd of supporters.

"This is a victory against all the odds, because we stood against powerful forces," he said. "They already eulogized us. Our opponents said the Netanyahu era is over."

He vowed to immediately begin work to form a new coalition and press forward with a hard-line agenda that includes annexing large parts of the West Bank — a step that would undermine any remaining hopes of establishing a Palestinian state.



DARKO BANDIC/AP

Migrants carry their belongings past Turkish policemen at the Turkish-Greek border Tuesday.

Thousands of migrants look for way around shut Greek border

Associated Press

KASTANIES, Greece — Thousands of migrants searched for ways to cross Greece's border with Turkey on Tuesday, as Athens ramped up its diplomatic efforts to get help from the European Union to seal off its eastern land and sea frontiers.

Turkey has made good on a threat announced Thursday to open its borders for those seeking to cross illegally into Eu-

rope. Many of those hoping to enter Greece were trying their luck by wading or rowing across the Evros River that runs along most of the length of the Turkish frontier.

The action by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan triggered days of violent clashes and scenes of chaos at the border. Greece has struggled to push back the wave of migrants, with its armed forces now leading the effort.

The government has accused

Turkey of causing a risk to its national security, and has imposed emergency measures to carry out summary deportations and deny migrants the right to apply for international protection for one month.

Also from Turkey, reports Tuesday said clashes in Syria continued, with Turkey shooting down a Syrian fighter jet in Syria's Idlib province. That is the third such incident in as many days.

Stripes

SERVICE DIRECTORY

The Daily Guide to Navigating the European Business Market

Transportation

944

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FACES

'Actors Studio' host James Lipton dies

James Lipton, an actor-turned-drama-school-dean who got hundreds of Hollywood luminaries to open up about their life and art and became an unlikely celebrity himself as the longtime host of "Inside the Actors Studio," died Monday.

Lipton died of bladder cancer at his New York home, his wife, Kedakai Lipton, told The Associated Press. He was 93.

The Detroit-born Lipton began the Bravo show in 1994 that also served as a class for his students at the Actors Studio Drama School, where he was then dean.

He often said his only requirement for a guest was whether they had something to teach his students. His first guest, Paul Newman, set a standard of stardom for those that would follow, including Meryl Streep, Robert De Niro, Glenn Close, Steven Spielberg and Barbara Streisand.

"Rest in peace, James Lipton. He was interested in the actor's process, which was so refreshing," Streisand said on Twitter.

Lipton was known, and often parodied, for his highbrow and sometimes worshipful tone with his subjects, and for his intensive preparation, represented by a stack of blue note cards that held his meticulously researched questions. When Will Ferrell played Lipton on "Saturday Night Live," the stack of cards was nearly a foot thick.

Many otherwise media-shy actors were willing to appear on "Inside the Actors Studio" because Lipton focused on their craft and not the usual celebrity chatter or project promotion.

He was not afraid to get personal, however, and his stuned interviews often asked "How did you know that?" when he asked about something from their childhood or private life.

"Obviously we deal in lots of anecdotes, and even some gossip and secrets," Lipton told the AP, "but they're tied together by a concern for and devotion to craft."



Lipton



Nathaniel Rateliff

Danny Clinch

Don't sweat it

Rateliff says solo tour doesn't spell the end of the Night Sweats, though it might not be what his fans expect

By CHRIS RIEMENSCHNEIDER
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

While he expressed a lot of uncertainty about his tour kickoff in Minneapolis this week, Nathaniel Rateliff was very firm on at least one point.

"This isn't any signal of the Night Sweats being over,"

the Denver-based singer/songwriter assured fans of his regular band. "I just needed to do something for myself for a little while."

That something was his new solo album, "And It's Still Alright," which his latest road trek is built around.

Issued in February with reviews praising the musical changeup, the record is a decidedly more intimate, mellow and downbeat collection than "S.O.B." "I Need Never Get Old" and the other rowdy soul-rock tunes Rateliff has been churning out for the past half-decade with the Night Sweats.

Many of the new songs were written in the aftermath of divorce and the sudden death in 2018 of a close friend, Night Sweats producer Richard Swift.

Rateliff hopes fans read into the fact that most of his upcoming gigs are in sit-down theaters and not the larger and more festive venues he and the Night Sweats typically play. He's touring with a more stripped-down but still sizable unit this time around.

"I'm sure there will still be some people not paying attention to what's going on who will say, 'This isn't the Nathaniel Rateliff I know and came to see! Where's 'S.O.B.'?'" he says. "Hopefully that doesn't happen a lot, or we

win them over if it does."

New songs like the softly strummed, slow-bobbing album opener "What a Drag" and the ethereally twangy single "And It's Still Alright" definitely don't sound like "S.O.B." — although that high-energy, horn-blasting 2015 hit also came from a personal place, since it was based on Rateliff's fight to give up drinking.

The singer further wrestled with sobriety in the rut of sad circumstances leading up to this record, a struggle he shared with Swift, who died of kidney and liver distress.

Before his passing, Swift — who also produced or played as a sideman for the Shins, the Black Keys and Damien Jurado — actually talked to Rateliff about making a solo record like this.

"I was going through my separation and divorce as I was making the second Night Sweats record, but I didn't really deal with it or talk about it with that record," he recounted. "It was too sensitive, I guess — the kind of thing that made sense tackling on a record with Richard. But then he passed away."

Rateliff said he "still wanted to make good on my commitment" and thus headed to Oregon to make the bulk of the album at Swift's studio. Recording there "definitely had its hard moments," he said, but in the end he was glad he did it.

"I felt good being there and still trying to make the kind of record we wanted to make together," he said, singling out Swift's albums with Jurado. "Those Damien records have such a unique, specific sound that I wanted, and a lot of it comes from that room. We had to do it there."

"So to me, this record sounds like Richard and has his spirit in it."

Chris Matthews retires from MSNBC, cites comments to women

Associated Press

Longtime MSNBC host Chris Matthews abruptly retired from his "Hardball" show on Monday, apologizing for making inappropriate comments about women and following a brutal week where he also took heat from supporters of Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren.

His exit came after a weekend of discussions with his bosses, three days after CNN a column by a freelance journalist about her "own sexist run-in" with Matthews in the makeup room before appearing on his show.

Matthews opened his program Monday with the announcement that he was ending his run on the political talk show he started in 1997. After a commercial break, he was replaced in the anchor chair by a shaken Steve Kornacki.

"This is the last 'Hardball' on MSNBC, and obviously this isn't for lack of interest in politics," Matthews said.

He said that "compliments on a woman's appearance that some men, including me, might have incorrectly thought were OK were never OK. Not then, and certainly not today, and for making such comments in the past, I'm sorry."

The 74-year-old Matthews, who worked under prostate surgery last year, underwent as a speechwriter for President Jimmy Carter and was top aide to House Speaker Thomas "Tip" O'Neill before turning to journalism as Washington bureau chief for the San Francisco Examiner. He had been talking to MSNBC management about retiring after the election, but he didn't survive until Super Tuesday.

He apologized last Monday for liken-

ing Sanders' win in the Nevada caucus two nights earlier to the Nazi takeover of France. On the Feb. 28 show, he confused the identities of South Carolina Senate candidate Jaime Harrison and Sen. Tim Scott, both black men.

Other news

■ The Recording Academy on Monday fired Deborah Dugan, its former president who called into question the integrity of the Grammy Awards nominations process and said she was sexually harassed by a top lawyer for the organization, which she called a boys' club that coddled and favored powerful men. The academy said the decision was reached after "two exhaustive, costly independent investigations" about Dugan and her allegations.

■ Public Enemy has abruptly fired founding member Flavor Flav following a public spat over a decision by members of the rap pioneers to perform at a Bernie Sanders campaign event. Public Enemy "will be moving forward without Flavor Flav," the band said in a brief statement Sunday. "We thank him for his years of service and wish him well."

■ Judge Sheindlin, aka "Judge Judy," announced Monday that her popular syndicated courtroom show will end production in 2021, but that she will return in a different format. The tough-talking former New York family court judge has ruled her television courtroom since 1996, and its popularity made her the highest-paid personality in TV. Sheindlin, 77, announced that she will be retiring as a show called "Judge Justice" that will debut in fall 2021.

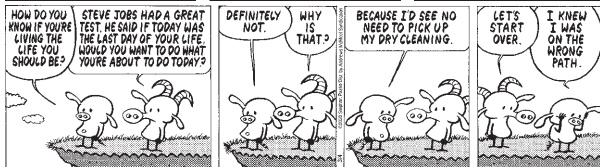
Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



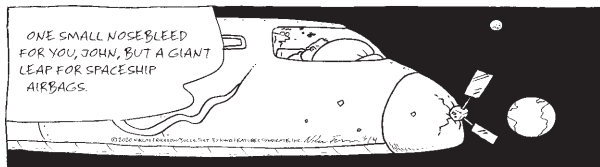
Non Sequitur



Candorville



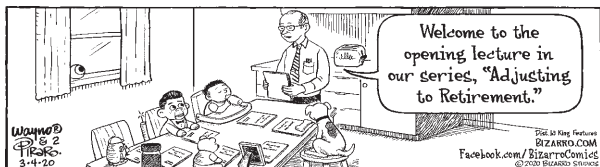
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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ACROSS

- 1 Workout venue
- 4 Mideast strip
- 8 Beer barrels
- 12 Old Olds
- 13 Spelling-out phrase
- 14 Sicilian volcano
- 15 Flight stat
- 16 Dressed very warmly
- 18 Bakery need
- 20 "Uh-huh"
- 21 Iranian money
- 24 Accepted fact
- 28 Got comfy on the sofa
- 32 Carry
- 33 Rock's Brian
- 34 Theater boxes
- 36 Suffix with senior
- 37 Long ride?
- 39 Made watertight
- 41 Ship's rear
- 43 Commotion
- 44 Aachen article
- 46 Sucker
- 50 Ensnarled
- 55 "Eureka!"
- 56 Crunchy cookie
- 57 Sommelier's suggestion
- 58 Hide-hair insert
- 59 Intend
- 60 Level
- 61 Turf

DOWN

- 1 Tennis great
- 2 Steffi
- 2 Holler
- 3 Marquand sleuth
- 4 Archangel with a trumpet
- 5 Tempe sch.
- 6 California wine, for short
- 7 Tennis star
- 8 "Consider this a donation"
- 9 Timetable abbr.
- 10 Livebeest
- 11 Enervate
- 17 Race segment
- 19 Internet address
- 23 Big fusses
- 23 Olypmic sleds
- 25 Nullify
- 26 Words to a backstabber
- 27 Tide variety
- 28 Animation frames
- 29 Squad
- 30 The Eternal City
- 31 Bog fuel
- 35 Indoor footwear
- 38 Salem's state
- 40 Epoch
- 42 Zero
- 45 Salamander
- 47 Catches
- 48 "Scram!"
- 49 Lawn party site
- 50 Male cat
- 51 Verb for you
- 52 PBS funder
- 53 Cato's 502
- 54 French article

Answer to Previous Puzzle

B	E	E	P	A	A	R	P	H	A	M
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O	M	E	N		P	L	A	Y	A	R
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3-4

CRYPTOQUIP

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Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I SAW A FELLOW WITH A LARGE IMAGE OF A DRINK FLASK INKED ON HIS ARM. IT WAS A THERMOS TAT.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: B equals D

SCOREBOARD

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College baseball

Baseball American Top 25

DURHAM, N.C. — The top 25 teams in the nation with records through Feb. 23 and previous ranking (selected by the staff of Baseball America):

Record	Rank	Team
11-1	1	Florida
11-1	2	Texas Tech
10-3	3	Vanderbilt
11-0	4	Georgia
11-0	5	North Carolina
9-3	6	Miami
7-3	7	Louisville
8-4	8	Arizona State
10-13	9	Mississippi State
10-13	10	Michigan
11-0	11	Oklahoma
11-0	12	Mississippi State
8-4	13	Arkansas
7-3	14	Florida State
11-0	15	NC State
9-2	16	Duke
11-0	17	Long Beach State
12-0	18	Tennessee
11-1	19	Central Florida
7-6	20	Louisiana State
6-1	21	Dallas Baptist
12-0	22	South Christian
2-3	23	Clemson
9-2	24	Rollins
8-3	25	East Carolina

Collegiate Baseball poll

TUCSON, Ariz. — The 2020 Collegiate Baseball poll, with records through Feb. 23 and previous ranking (selected by the staff of Collegiate Baseball):

Record	Rank	Team
11-0	1	UCLA
11-0	2	Florida
11-1	3	Texas Tech
10-3	4	North Carolina
10-3	5	Vanderbilt
10-3	6	Louisville
10-3	7	NC State
10-3	8	Mississippi State
10-3	9	Arizona State
10-3	10	Arkansas
10-3	11	Florida State
10-3	12	Central Florida
10-3	13	Tennessee
10-3	14	Auburn
10-3	15	South Carolina
10-3	16	Texas
10-3	17	Long Beach State
10-3	18	Duke
10-3	19	Florida
10-3	20	Georgia
10-3	21	Alabama
10-3	22	Pepperdine
10-3	23	North Carolina
10-3	24	Clemson
10-3	25	Duke
10-3	26	Florida
10-3	27	Georgia
10-3	28	Alabama
10-3	29	Florida
10-3	30	Georgia

Monday's scores

NC A&T & Boston College 5
SOUTHWEST
Texas A&M-SC 7, UTSA 5
WEST
Holy Cross 16, CS Bakersfield 2

Deals

Monday's transactions

Major League Baseball
Seattle Mariners — Reassigned RHP Jack Anderson, Darren McCaughy, Wyatt Mills and Pennington to minor league camp.
San Francisco Giants — Reassigned RHPs Jordan Cowan and Connor Hoover to minor league camp.

National League
Chicago Cubs — Signed RHPs Adbert Alzolay, Dillon Benson, Trevor Megill, Tyson Miller, Alec Mills, Ryan Norwood, Colin Rea, Manuel Rodriguez, Cesar Suarez, Dante Urdarraz and Brian Wilson; LHPs Justin Steele and Brad Peacock; and infielders (IF) and shortstop (SS) Ian Happ to one year contracts.

DC UNITED — Signed M Federico Higuain as a free agent.

NEW YORK CITY FC — Acquired M Nicolas Acevedo on permanent transfer.

SKY BLUE — Signed M McCall Zerboni to a one year contract.

DAYTON UNIVERSITY — Named Jim Carson and Josh Henderson as coaches to the football staff.

DAYTON UNIVERSITY — Named Billy Martin head men's and women's soccer coach.

College basketball

AP Women's Top 25

The top 25 teams in the Associated Press' women's college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, records through March 1, total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote and one point for a 25th-place vote and last week's ranking:

Record	Rank	Team
21-1	1	South Carolina (27)
21-1	2	Baylor (22)
21-1	3	Oregon (11)
21-1	4	Louisville (17)
21-1	5	North Carolina (10)
21-1	6	Maryland (10)
21-1	7	UCLA (10)
21-1	8	UCLA (10)
21-1	9	Mississippi St.
21-1	10	NC State
21-1	11	Northwestern
21-1	12	South Carolina
21-1	13	Arizona
21-1	14	Georgia
21-1	15	Texas A&M
21-1	16	Kentucky
21-1	17	South Dakota
21-1	18	DePaul
21-1	19	Indiana
21-1	20	Florida St.
21-1	21	Missouri St.
21-1	22	Arkansas
21-1	23	Arkansas
21-1	24	Arkansas
21-1	25	Arkansas

Monday's women's scores

EAST
CCSU 71, Fairfield Dickinson 57
Fairleigh Dickinson 57, Wagner 53
Manhattan 59, Iona 47
Marquette 62, St. Francis Brooklyn 54
NYU 68, Delaware St. 57
St. Francis Brooklyn 54, Marquette 62
Sacred Heart 60, Bryant 49
UConn 80, South Florida 39

SOUTH
Bethune-Cookman 70, NC Central 55
Florida Gulf Coast 72, Jacksonville 64
Grambling St. 72, MSU 47
Marquette 62, St. Francis Brooklyn 54
NYU 68, Delaware St. 57
St. Francis Brooklyn 54, Marquette 62
Sacred Heart 60, Bryant 49
UConn 80, South Florida 39

SOUTHWEST
Purdue 70, East Carolina 53
Cincinnati 76, East Carolina 53
Purdue 70, East Carolina 53
Cincinnati 76, East Carolina 53
Purdue 70, East Carolina 53
Cincinnati 76, East Carolina 53

FAR WEST
Boise St. 73, Air Force 57
Fresno St. 75, Nevada 71
San Jose St. 67, UNLV 48
Wyoming 64, Utah 59

Women's conference tournaments

American East Conference
First Round
Wednesday, March 4
Fordham vs. St. Joseph (NY)
Saint Louis vs. George Mason
St. Francis vs. St. Bonaventure
Duquesne vs. Rhode Island
Wilmington vs. UMBC
George Washington vs. Richmond

Atlantic 10 Conference
First Round
Wednesday, March 4
Stony Brook vs. Albany (NY)
Maine vs. Vermont
Duquesne vs. UMBC
Binghamton vs. UNC
George Washington vs. Richmond

Big East Conference
First Round
Wednesday, March 4
Stony Brook vs. Albany (NY)
Maine vs. Vermont
Duquesne vs. UMBC
Binghamton vs. UNC
George Washington vs. Richmond

Big West Conference
First Round
Wednesday, March 4
Stony Brook vs. Albany (NY)
Maine vs. Vermont
Duquesne vs. UMBC
Binghamton vs. UNC
George Washington vs. Richmond

Big Sky Conference
First Round
Wednesday, March 4
Stony Brook vs. Albany (NY)
Maine vs. Vermont
Duquesne vs. UMBC
Binghamton vs. UNC
George Washington vs. Richmond

Big West Conference
First Round
Wednesday, March 4
Stony Brook vs. Albany (NY)
Maine vs. Vermont
Duquesne vs. UMBC
Binghamton vs. UNC
George Washington vs. Richmond

Big West Conference
First Round
Wednesday, March 4
Stony Brook vs. Albany (NY)
Maine vs. Vermont
Duquesne vs. UMBC
Binghamton vs. UNC
George Washington vs. Richmond

Big West Conference
First Round
Wednesday, March 4
Stony Brook vs. Albany (NY)
Maine vs. Vermont
Duquesne vs. UMBC
Binghamton vs. UNC
George Washington vs. Richmond

Big West Conference
First Round
Wednesday, March 4
Stony Brook vs. Albany (NY)
Maine vs. Vermont
Duquesne vs. UMBC
Binghamton vs. UNC
George Washington vs. Richmond

Big West Conference
First Round
Wednesday, March 4
Stony Brook vs. Albany (NY)
Maine vs. Vermont
Duquesne vs. UMBC
Binghamton vs. UNC
George Washington vs. Richmond

Mountain West Conference

At Las Vegas
First Round
Sunday, March 1
Nevada vs. New Mexico
Air Force 60, Colorado St. 48
Utah St. 81, San Jose St. 79, UT

Second Round
Monday, March 2
Fresno State 76, UNLV 48
Utah St. 81, San Jose St. 79, UT
Nevada vs. New Mexico
Air Force 60, Colorado St. 48
Utah St. 81, San Jose St. 79, UT

Third Round
Tuesday, March 3
Fresno State vs. San Jose State
Utah St. vs. New Mexico
Air Force vs. Wyoming
Colorado St. vs. UNLV

Fourth Round
Wednesday, March 4
Semifinal winners
Ohio Valley Conference
At Evansville, Ind.
First Round
Wednesday, March 4
UT-Martin vs. Murray St.
Belmont vs. Austin Peay
E. Illinois vs. Tennessee Tech
SE Missouri vs. Tennessee Tech

Second Round
Thursday, March 5
Belmont vs. Austin Peay
E. Illinois vs. Tennessee Tech
SE Missouri vs. Tennessee Tech
UT-Martin vs. Murray St.

Third Round
Friday, March 6
Belmont vs. Austin Peay
E. Illinois vs. Tennessee Tech
SE Missouri vs. Tennessee Tech
UT-Martin vs. Murray St.

Fourth Round
Saturday, March 7
Belmont vs. Austin Peay
E. Illinois vs. Tennessee Tech
SE Missouri vs. Tennessee Tech
UT-Martin vs. Murray St.

Fifth Round
Sunday, March 8
Belmont vs. Austin Peay
E. Illinois vs. Tennessee Tech
SE Missouri vs. Tennessee Tech
UT-Martin vs. Murray St.

Sixth Round
Monday, March 9
Belmont vs. Austin Peay
E. Illinois vs. Tennessee Tech
SE Missouri vs. Tennessee Tech
UT-Martin vs. Murray St.

Seventh Round
Tuesday, March 10
Belmont vs. Austin Peay
E. Illinois vs. Tennessee Tech
SE Missouri vs. Tennessee Tech
UT-Martin vs. Murray St.

Eighth Round
Wednesday, March 11
Belmont vs. Austin Peay
E. Illinois vs. Tennessee Tech
SE Missouri vs. Tennessee Tech
UT-Martin vs. Murray St.

Ninth Round
Thursday, March 12
Belmont vs. Austin Peay
E. Illinois vs. Tennessee Tech
SE Missouri vs. Tennessee Tech
UT-Martin vs. Murray St.

Tenth Round
Friday, March 13
Belmont vs. Austin Peay
E. Illinois vs. Tennessee Tech
SE Missouri vs. Tennessee Tech
UT-Martin vs. Murray St.

Eleventh Round
Saturday, March 14
Belmont vs. Austin Peay
E. Illinois vs. Tennessee Tech
SE Missouri vs. Tennessee Tech
UT-Martin vs. Murray St.

Twelfth Round
Sunday, March 15
Belmont vs. Austin Peay
E. Illinois vs. Tennessee Tech
SE Missouri vs. Tennessee Tech
UT-Martin vs. Murray St.

Thirteenth Round
Monday, March 16
Belmont vs. Austin Peay
E. Illinois vs. Tennessee Tech
SE Missouri vs. Tennessee Tech
UT-Martin vs. Murray St.

Fourteenth Round
Tuesday, March 17
Belmont vs. Austin Peay
E. Illinois vs. Tennessee Tech
SE Missouri vs. Tennessee Tech
UT-Martin vs. Murray St.

Fifteenth Round
Wednesday, March 18
Belmont vs. Austin Peay
E. Illinois vs. Tennessee Tech
SE Missouri vs. Tennessee Tech
UT-Martin vs. Murray St.

Sixteenth Round
Thursday, March 19
Belmont vs. Austin Peay
E. Illinois vs. Tennessee Tech
SE Missouri vs. Tennessee Tech
UT-Martin vs. Murray St.

Seventeenth Round
Friday, March 20
Belmont vs. Austin Peay
E. Illinois vs. Tennessee Tech
SE Missouri vs. Tennessee Tech
UT-Martin vs. Murray St.

Eighteenth Round
Saturday, March 21
Belmont vs. Austin Peay
E. Illinois vs. Tennessee Tech
SE Missouri vs. Tennessee Tech
UT-Martin vs. Murray St.

Nineteenth Round
Sunday, March 22
Belmont vs. Austin Peay
E. Illinois vs. Tennessee Tech
SE Missouri vs. Tennessee Tech
UT-Martin vs. Murray St.

Twentieth Round
Monday, March 23
Belmont vs. Austin Peay
E. Illinois vs. Tennessee Tech
SE Missouri vs. Tennessee Tech
UT-Martin vs. Murray St.

Twenty-first Round
Tuesday, March 24
Belmont vs. Austin Peay
E. Illinois vs. Tennessee Tech
SE Missouri vs. Tennessee Tech
UT-Martin vs. Murray St.

Tech (18-11) 14; Arizona (19-10) 14; Saint Mary's (24-7) 13; Marquette (18-10) 13; UT (20-4) 13; Texas (18-11) 13; Providence (17-12) 13; UTEP (22-6) 13; Southern California (22-6) 13; Wichita State (22-7) 13; Stanford (20-9) 13.

Monday's men's scores

EAST
California (Pa.) 74, Gannon 58
Washington 62, Mc-Eastern 60
Millersville 79, Shepherd 69
Norfolk St. 75, Delaware St. 73
Pitt-Johnston 85, Slippery Rock 78
West Chester 83, Holy Owen 73

SOUTH
Benedict 30, McLeone-Owen 71
Duke 88, NC State 65
Grambling St. 81, MSU 61
Jackson St. 76, Ark-Pine Bluff 56
NC A&T 70, SC State 65

MIDWEST
Savannah St. 79, Spring Hill 66
Minnesota St. 79, Minn. Duluth 73
North St. 81, Minn. St. (Headhead)

SOUTHWEST
Baylor 71, Texas Tech 68, OT
Prairie View 73, Alabama A&M 62
Texas Southern 78, Alabama St. 73
Idaho St. 78, Weber St. 70

Men's conference tournaments

Atlantic Sun Conference
First Round
Tuesday, March 3
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT

Second Round
Wednesday, March 4
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT

Third Round
Thursday, March 5
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT

Fourth Round
Friday, March 6
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT

Fifth Round
Saturday, March 7
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT

Sixth Round
Sunday, March 8
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT

Seventh Round
Monday, March 9
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT

Eighth Round
Tuesday, March 10
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT

Ninth Round
Wednesday, March 11
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT

Tenth Round
Thursday, March 12
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT

Eleventh Round
Friday, March 13
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT

Twelfth Round
Saturday, March 14
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT

Thirteenth Round
Sunday, March 15
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT

Fourteenth Round
Monday, March 16
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT

Fifteenth Round
Tuesday, March 17
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT

Sixteenth Round
Wednesday, March 18
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT

Seventeenth Round
Thursday, March 19
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT

Eighteenth Round
Friday, March 20
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT
Liberty vs. NJIT

Tennis

Monterey Open

Monday
AT Club Sonoma
Women's Singles
Purse: \$25,170
Surface: Hardwood outdoor
Round of 32
Marie Bouzkova, Czech Republic, def. Kristina Kuksova, Slovakia, 6-4, 6-2.
Alexandra Petersen (0), Sweden, def. Katerina Kozlovskaya, Ukraine, 3-6, 7-6 (1), 6-4.
Wang Yafan (8), China, def. Lara Arruabarrena, Spain, 6-4, 6-4.
Astra Simionescu (0), Romania, def. Nina Stoenescu, Serbia, 6-4, 6-4.
Caroline Dolehide, United States, 3-6, 6-2, 6-1.
Anna-Karina Schmiedlova, Slovakia, def. Venus Williams, United States, 4-6, 6-3, 6-2.
Emma Stephens (5), United States, def. Emma Navone, United States, 6-4, 5-7, 6-1.

Women's Doubles
Round of 16
Storm Sanders and Ellen Perez (3), Australia, def. Dalila Jakupovic, Slovenia, and Katrin Christian, United States, 7-5, 6-2.
Johanna Konta, Britain, and Elina Svitolina, Ukraine, def. Sara Errani (1), and Daniela Seguel, Chile (5), 6-3, 6-3.

Women's Doubles
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Women's Doubles
Round of 16
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Johanna Konta, Britain, and Elina Svitolina, Ukraine, def. Sara Errani (1), and Daniela Seguel, Chile (5), 6-3, 6-3.

Women's Doubles
Round of 16
Storm Sanders and Ellen Perez (3), Australia, def. Dalila Jakupovic, Slovenia, and Katrin Christian, United States, 7-5, 6-2.
Johanna Konta, Britain, and Elina Sv

NBA

Roundup

Heat put clamps on Bucks – again

Miami now 2-0 against Milwaukee

Associated Press

MIAMI — The Miami Heat stand alone, the first team to beat the Milwaukee Bucks twice this season.

Jae Crowder and Jimmy Butler each scored 18 points, Goran Dragic added 15 and the Heat beat the Bucks 105-89 on Wednesday night — moving to 2-0 against the NBA's best team.

Bam Adebayo had 14 points and 13 rebounds for Miami, which improved to 39-22 and matched its win total from last season with 21 games remaining. Kendrick Nunn had 13 points and Kelly Olynyk added 11 for the Heat.

"Collective effort," Crowder said. "All hands on deck."

It was a season-low in points for the Bucks, set for the second straight day after Milwaukee managed only 93 in a win on Sunday at Charlotte. The difference was from the three-point line: Miami was 18-for-37, the Bucks were 7-for-34.

"Not saying we can hold great offensive teams like this regularly under 90 ... but we have it in us to do it more consistently," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said.

Milwaukee has faced 21 of the 29 other NBA teams more than once this season. Most of those clubs have had minimal, or no, success: Chicago and Orlando went 0-4; Atlanta, Cleveland, New York and Charlotte are 0-3. Miami clinched the season series, and Boston — which would have to sweep its last two matchups with the Bucks — is the only other Eastern Conference team with a chance to do that.

"Tough game," Milwaukee coach Mike Budenholzer said. "The physicality, the defensive activity from both teams was

very good. Credit to Miami, they played very well on both ends, shot the ball well, they made tough shots. It wasn't our night."

Brook Lopez led the Bucks (52-9) with 21 points. Giannis Antetokounmpo matched a season low with 13 points on 6-for-18 shooting, and grabbed 15 rebounds.

Knicks 125, Rockets 123: Rookie guard RJ Barrett tied his season high with 27 points and host New York snapped Houston's six-game winning streak.

The Knicks pummeled the small-ball Rockets on the boards and in the paint to make a successful first impression in front of Leon Rose, the longtime player agent who was hired Monday as team president.

Julius Randle added 16 points and 16 rebounds for New York, which held on after building a 21-point lead. Th Knicks ended a nine-game home losing streak against Houston with their first victory over it since Jan. 26, 2009 — when Rockets coach Mike D'Antoni was on the other sideline.

Pacers 116, Spurs 111: Malcolm Brogdon scored 26 points, T.J. Warren added 23 and Indiana rallied to win at San Antonio after blowing a 15-point lead.

The Pacers won their fourth straight, moving into a tie for fifth-place with Philadelphia in the Eastern Conference.

Patty Mills scored 24 points to lead the Spurs and Trey Lyles added 20. San Antonio, which has lost eight of 11, dropped four games behind the Memphis Grizzlies for eighth place in the West.

Bulls 109, Mavericks 107: Coby White scored 19 points, Otto Porter Jr. added 18 in his return from a broken left foot and host



WILFREDO LEE/AP

Miami Heat forward Jimmy Butler passes the ball around Milwaukee Bucks center Brook Lopez, right, and Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo in the Heat's 105-89 win Monday in Miami.

Chicago hung on to beat Dallas when Luka Doncic's desperation heave bounced off the rim.

Denzel Valentine added a season-high 17 points and the Bulls won for just the second time in 12 games even though leading scorer Zach LaVine sat out with a strained left quadriceps.

Tim Hardaway Jr. led the Mavs with 27 points. Doncic scored 23 after sitting out Sunday's win at Minnesota because of a sprained left thumb.

Grizzlies 127, Hawks 89: Gorgui Dieng had 17 points and 10 rebounds, leading nine Memphis scorers in double figures, and the Grizzlies pulled away in the second half to win at Atlanta.

Memphis, trying to protect its No. 8 spot in the Western Conference playoff field, has won two straight following five consecutive losses.

Jonas Valanciunas had 15 points with 15 rebounds for the Grizzlies. Josh Jackson had 15 points and Ja Morant scored 13.

Trae Young led the Hawks with 19 points on 5-for-17 shooting. Atlanta was denied its first

three-game winning streak of the season.

Jazz 126, Cavaliers 113: Bojan Bogdanovic scored 28 points, Rudy Gobert added 20 and Utah began a four-game trip with a win at Cleveland, which dressed only nine players and used just seven.

Donovan Mitchell had 19 points and nine rebounds, and the Jazz made 20 three-pointers while staying in the fifth Western Conference playoff spot.

Collin Sexton scored a career-high 32 points and Kevin Love scored 22 for the Cavaliers, who dropped to 3-4 under coach J.B. Bickerstaff.

Trail Blazers 130, Magic 107: CJ McCollum scored 41 points and Gary Trent Jr. added 24 to help Portland roll to a win at Orlando.

Hassan Whiteside had 16 points and 13 rebounds and Trevor Ariza scored 11 as the Blazers ended a three-game losing streak by outscoring the Magic 38-19 in the final period.

Nikola Vucevic led Orlando with 30 points and 11 rebounds.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	42	18	.700	
Boston	41	18	.695	½
Philadelphia	37	24	.607	½½
Washington	36	23	.611	1½
New York	19	42	.311	23½
Southeast Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	39	22	.639	—
Orlando	27	34	.443	12
Washington	22	37	.373	16
Charlotte	21	39	.350	17½
Atlanta	19	44	.302	21
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	32	9	.852	—
Indiana	27	24	.607	15
Chicago	21	40	.344	31
Detroit	20	42	.323	32½
Cleveland	17	44	.279	35

Western Conference

Southwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	39	21	.650	—
Dallas	37	25	.597	3
Memphis	30	31	.492	9½
New Orleans	26	34	.433	13
San Antonio	25	34	.424	13½
Northwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Denver	41	19	.683	—
Utah	38	22	.633	3
Oklahoma City	37	23	.617	4
Portland	27	35	.435	15
Minnesota	17	42	.288	23½
Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Lakers	46	13	.780	—
L.A. Clippers	41	19	.683	5½
Sacramento	36	24	.600	10
Phoenix	24	37	.393	23
Golden State	13	48	.213	34

Sunday's games

Dallas 111, Minnesota 91
Philadelphia 136, Phoenix 130
Sacramento 106, Detroit 100
Denver 133, Toronto 118
L.A. Lakers 122, New Orleans 114
Washington 124, Golden State 110
Tuesday's games
Utah 126, Cleveland 113
Portland 130, Orlando 107
New York 125, Houston 123
Miami 105, Milwaukee 89
Memphis 127, Atlanta 88
Chicago 109, Dallas 107
Indiana 116, San Antonio 111
Tuesday's games
San Antonio at Charlotte
Brooklyn at Boston
L.A. Clippers at Oklahoma City
Minnesota at New Orleans
Golden State at Denver
Toronto at Phoenix
Philadelphia at L.A. Lakers
Washington at Sacramento
Wednesday's games
Boston at Cleveland
Indiana at Milwaukee
Oklahoma City at Detroit
Memphis at Brooklyn
Orlando at Miami
Utah at New York
Chicago at Minnesota
New Orleans at Dallas
Washington at Portland
Thursday's games
Denver at Charlotte
L.A. Clippers at Houston
Philadelphia at Sacramento
Toronto at Golden State

NBA tells players to avoid high-fives amid virus worries

By TIM REYNOLDS

Associated Press

MIAMI — The NBA has told players to avoid high-fiving fans and strangers and avoid taking any item for autographs, the league's latest response in its ongoing monitoring of the coronavirus crisis that has spread to most corners of the planet.

The league, in a memo sent to teams on Sunday and obtained Monday by The Associated Press, offered 10 recommendations to players with hopes of decreasing risks of getting the virus — among them, not taking items such as pens, markers, balls and jerseys from autograph seekers.

The NBA also told teams that it is consulting "with infectious disease experts, including the Centers for Disease Control" and infectious disease researchers at Columbia University in New York.

"You just have to be careful."

CJ McCollum

Portland Trail Blazers guard

"We are also in regular communication with each other, NBA teams including team physicians and athletic trainers, other professional sports leagues, and of course, many of you," the league wrote in its memo to teams, their physicians and athletic training staffs. ESPN first reported on the contents of the memo.

Some players are already heeding the advice. "Corona," Bobby Portis of the New York Knicks said as he offered some fist-bump greetings on Monday night before his team

faced the Houston Rockets.

Jimmy Butler of the Miami Heat said he wasn't necessarily worried or thinking about avoiding high-fives.

"I don't think about any of that," Butler said. "I'm still going to be who I am. We're still going to be who we are."

Portland guard CJ McCollum said in a tweet on Saturday that he is taking the matter seriously, saying he is "officially taking a break from signing autographs until further notice."

"You just have to be careful," McCollum said Monday night in Orlando. "Obviously it's affecting people, especially people who are displaying weaker immune systems and people over 60. You've got to check yourself and wash your hands, try to reduce contact with outsiders and outside germs."

McCollum has tweeted or retweeted several virus-related posts in the last couple days.

NHL



PAUL SANCY/AP

Detroit Red Wings defenseman Trevor Daley, left, and Colorado Avalanche left wing Matt Nieto battle for the puck during the first period of a 2-1 win by the Avalanche on Monday in Detroit.

Roundup

Avs nip Red Wings for 7th straight win

Associated Press

DETROIT — Gabriel Landeskog withstood a crunching hit while making a pass that sprung Logan O'Connor for a breakaway goal in the second period, and the Colorado Avalanche beat the Detroit Red Wings 2-1 on Monday night for their seventh consecutive victory.

Vladislav Namestnikov also scored for the Avalanche, who extended a franchise record with their ninth consecutive road win. Anthony Mantha had the only goal for the Red Wings.

With the score tied at 1, Landeskog was just inside his own blue line when he took a hit from Detroit's Robby Fabrizi. As he was clocked, Landeskog released a pass up the ice to O'Connor, who was behind the defense at the other blue line.

"That was a selfless play. That's why he wears the 'C,' obviously," O'Connor said. "That was a great pass by him — great look that set up the whole opportunity there."

O'Connor went in and beat goalie Jonathan Bernier for his second goal of the season.

Mantha converted off a goal-mouth scramble to open the scoring in the first, but Colorado equalized before the period was over.

Ryan Graves took a shot that slipped through Bernier, and Namestnikov kicked the puck to himself in the crease and then stuffed it in the net with his stick.

O'Connor was called up from the AHL on Saturday, and Namestnikov arrived from Ottawa in a recent trade.

"I think that's Vlad's best game since he's been here," Avalanche coach Jared Bednar said.

"I think that's his third one. It looked like his first game, he was thinking too much. Second game he got a little bit better, a little more involved."

Oilers 8, Predators 3: Leon Draisaitl, the NHL's scoring leader, had the first four-goal game of his career and added an assist as Edmonton won at Nashville to sweep the season series.

"I don't need to beat around the bush," Draisaitl said. "When you score four goals, you feel good. You feel good about yourself, you feel good about your linemates. Obviously, they made some great plays to me tonight and made it pretty easy for me."

Connor McDavid scored the go-ahead goal in the third period and had four assists. Kailer Yamamoto and Josh Archibald each had a goal and an assist, and Zack Kassian also scored as the Oilers won their second straight.

Ryan Nugent-Hopkins and Darnell Nurse had three assists apiece.

The Predators had dominated Edmonton lately, including 13 straight wins between 2014 and 2018. These aren't those Oilers, though. Edmonton is second in the Pacific Division and pulled within two points of first-place Vegas with a game in hand.

The Oilers broke open a tie game by scoring three of their five goals in the third in a span of 2:21.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Boston	66	41	13	12	94	218	167
Tampa Bay	65	41	19	5	87	230	183
Toronto	66	35	23	8	78	233	218
Florida	66	33	26	7	73	224	224
Montreal	67	30	28	9	69	203	207
Buffalo	65	29	28	8	66	188	205
Ottawa	66	23	31	12	58	178	224
Detroit	68	15	48	5	35	136	257

Metropolitan Division						
Washington	65	40	19	6	86	226 199
Philadelphia	65	38	20	7	83	220 190
Pittsburgh	64	37	21	6	80	204 178
N.Y. Islanders	64	35	21	8	78	181 175
Columbus	67	32	21	14	78	175 179
Carolina	64	35	24	5	75	207 183
N.Y. Rangers	65	35	26	4	74	217 203
New Jersey	65	26	27	12	64	177 216

Western Conference

	Central Division						
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
St. Louis	66	39	17	10	88	213	184
Colorado	65	40	18	7	87	223	173
Dallas	65	37	21	7	81	177	168
Nashville	65	32	25	8	72	207	212
Winnipeg	67	33	28	6	72	201	198
Minnesota	65	32	26	7	71	206	206
Chicago	65	28	28	9	66	195	207

Chicago	65	29	28	8	66	195	207
Pacific Division							
Vegas	67	36	23	8	80	216	202
Edmonton	66	35	23	8	78	212	204
Calgary	67	34	26	7	75	201	206
Vancouver	65	34	25	6	74	214	204
Arizona	67	32	27	8	72	187	178
San Jose	65	28	33	4	60	169	209
Anaheim	65	26	31	8	60	168	205
Los Angeles	66	25	35	6	56	164	206
Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per							

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

Sunday's games
Philadelphia 5, N.Y. Rangers 3
Calgary 3, Florida 0
Columbus 5, Vancouver 3
New Jersey 3, Anaheim 0
Washington 4, Minnesota 3
Los Angeles 4, Vegas 1

Monday's games
Colorado 2, Detroit 1
Edmonton 8, Nashville 3

Tuesday's games
Montreal at N.Y. Islanders
Ottawa at Pittsburgh
St. Louis at N.Y. Rangers
Boston at Tampa Bay
Buffalo at Winnipeg
Nashville at Minnesota
Anaheim at Chicago
Edmonton at Dallas
New Jersey at Vegas
Toronto at San Jose

Wednesday's games
Philadelphia at Washington
Columbus at Calgary
Anaheim at Colorado
Arizona at Vancouver

Thursday's games
Boston at Florida
Carolina at Philadelphia
Montreal at Tampa Bay
Pittsburgh at Buffalo
Washington at N.Y. Rangers
St. Louis at Ottawa
Dallas at Nashville
Edmonton at Chicago
Minnesota at San Jose
Toronto at Los Angeles

Penguins hold off on pushing panic button during skid

By WILL GRAVES
Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Mike Sullivan's voice was calm as he urged patience and understanding, qualities that tend to be in short supply around the NHL when the calendar flips to March and the number of regular-season games dwindles.

They're traits the Pittsburgh Penguins coach hasn't had to rely on much during his four-plus years on the bench, which include back-to-back Stanley Cup championships. Yet with the Penguins mired in their longest losing streak since 2012 — a six-game skid that's rendered their appearance at the top of the Metropolitan Division two weeks ago a mere cameo — the typically fiery Sullivan has taken a more muted approach.

"There's no easy stretch," Sullivan said Monday. "That's just the nature of the league."

It's a nature the Penguins have largely been immune to for years. Yet they have looked decidedly vulnerable while getting outscored 24-8 against a schedule littered with teams basically playing out the season. A winless road swing through California last week culminated with a 5-0 loss to San Jose that led captain Sidney Crosby to place the blame squarely on his shoulders.

Though Crosby — who has just one point since a 5-2 romp over Toronto on Feb. 18 pushed Pittsburgh into first place in the Metropolitan — hasn't quite looked like himself of late, neither have the 19 other guys in the lineup on a given night. Asked if there was any one common thread for a swoon no one saw coming, Crosby shrugged.

"It's hard to point the finger at one specific thing, but I think putting the puck in the net a little more would give us some breathing room," he said.

Of course, for the puck to go into the net, the Penguins actually need to shoot it. It's something one of the league's most talented offensive teams has struggled to do lately. While on the surface, Pittsburgh's average of 33 shots per game during the losing streak looks healthy, the reality is that the Penguins have fallen into the habit of trying to make the pretty play instead of the right one.

"Sometimes the ESPN highlight reel kind of gets in your mind," forward Jared McCann said. "But I feel like sometimes, especially with the way things are going right now, we've just got to throw pucks on net. We've got to throw it at a goalie's feet. We've got to make the easy shot, sometimes it'll go in."

McCann attributed Pittsburgh's scoring issues partly to bad "puck luck," that inexplicable phenomenon associated with the whims of a one-inch piece of vulcanized rubber. Though the Penguins have had the lead just once at the end of their last 24 periods, McCann insists the players aren't frustrated. There are times when they feel they've played well for extended stretches only to have nothing to show for it thanks to a bounce here or a bounce there.

"You've got to laugh at it," McCann said. "What are you going to do? Sit there and mope? And you'll just dig yourself deeper and make it worse. I'm trying to stay positive with it."

Having the NHL's longest active playoff streak helps. Pittsburgh hasn't missed the postseason since 2006.



JASON FRANSON, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

Pittsburgh Penguins left wing Conor Sheary, left, battles for the puck against San Jose Sharks center Logan Couture. The Penguins have lost six games in a row, their longest slump since 2012.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Games could be held later in year

Japan's Olympic minister says contract only specifies event has to be held during 2020

By YURI KAGEYAMA
AND MARI YAMAGUCHI
Associated Press

TOKYO — Japan's Olympic minister said Tuesday the contract to hold the Tokyo Games only specifies the event has to be held during 2020.

Seiko Hashimoto's response to a question in the upper house of parliament implies the Olympics could be held later in the year and would not have to start on July 24 as planned. The Paralympics open on Aug. 25.

The Tokyo Olympics are being threatened by a fast-spreading virus that has been blamed for 12 deaths in Japan and has shut down most schools, sports competitions and Olympic-related events in the country. The virus that started in China has been detected in at least 70 countries, with 90,000 cases and 3,100 deaths reported.

The IOC has the right to cancel the games only if the number of deaths in Japan and has shut down most schools, sports competitions and Olympic-related events in the country. The virus that started in China has been detected in at least 70 countries, with 90,000 cases and 3,100 deaths reported.

IOC President Thomas Bach and Tokyo organizers have repeatedly said they expect the Olympics to open on schedule. Others have suggested the spreading virus could force can-

cellation, postponement or moving events to other cities.

During a scheduled executive board meeting on Tuesday, the IOC issued a statement expressing "full commitment to the success of the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020, taking place from July 24 to Aug. 9, 2020."

"The IOC (board) encourages all athletes to continue to prepare (for the games)," the Olympic body said, restating it would "continue to follow the advice of WHO (World Health Organization)."

In an interview last week with only Japanese media, Bach declined to "fuel the flames of speculation" about reports of cancellation or postponement. Hashimoto was asked if she believed the Olympics should be held even if the coronavirus outbreak risk was worse than it is now.

"We are making the utmost effort so that we don't have to face that situation," she said.

Any decision to move the games back would impact international broadcasters, who would have away over any changes.

The International Olympic Committee gets 73% of its \$5.7 billion income in a four-year Olympic cycle from selling broadcast rights. About half of that TV income is from American network NBC.

The 1964 Tokyo Olympics were



EUGENE HOSHINO/AP

A masked man works at a construction site with the Olympic rings in the background on Tuesday at Tokyo's Odaiba district. The spreading virus from China has put the Tokyo Olympics at risk. The Olympics are scheduled to open on July 24.

'We are making the utmost effort so that we don't have to face that situation.'

Seiko Hashimoto

Japan's Olympic minister on possibility of hosting Games amid coronavirus outbreak

held in October. But the games have now shifted to summer, largely because it's the only time slot open for sports broadcasters. North America in the fall is filled with the NFL, college football, baseball, basketball and hockey. Europe is jammed with soccer in England, Spain, Germany, France and Italy, not to mention rugby and cricket where those sports are popular.

Former IOC vice president

Dick Pound told The Associated Press in an interview last week that a decision about the Olympics probably has to be made in the next several months. Kevan Gosper, another former IOC vice president and now an honorary IOC member, also said cancellation was feasible.

The Olympics have been canceled only three times, all during wartime.

Tokyo organizers on Tuesday

were forced to call off a Paralympic wheelchair rugby test event following suggestions from Prime Minister Shizo Abe to hold down large crowd events for several weeks.

Tokyo organizers have 17 test events remaining on their schedule. The last one is to end on May 8. Most are small events featuring only local athletes. The most significant is a gymnastics test on April 4-6 that is expected to have non-Japanese athletes competing.

Japan's professional baseball league is playing preseason games in stadiums without fans.

AP sports writers Stephen Wade in Tokyo and Graham Dunbar in Lausanne, Switzerland contributed to this report.

Milan residents banned from match; UEFA dampens panic

Associated Press

ROME — Residents of Milan will not be allowed to attend the Italian Cup semifinal match between Juventus and AC Milan on Wednesday at Allianz Stadium in Turin as part of anti-virus precautions being taken.

The second leg of the semifinals will be off-limits to residents of the regions of Lombardy, which contains Milan, and Emilia Romagna and Veneto, plus the provinces of Pesaro, Urbino and Savona — the areas hardest hit by the COVID-19 virus.

Juventus made the announcement on Monday, asking fans to show up early so their identification cards can be checked carefully.

The first leg ended 1-1.

No such ban has yet been put in place for the other semifinal match between Napoli and Inter Milan at San Paolo Stadium in southern Italy.

A total of 10 Serie A matches in Italy have been postponed over the past two weeks because of the virus.

Lombardy has been the epicenter of Italy's outbreak, registering the first positive test of the northern cluster and now counting 984 of Italy's 1,694 cases.

Also Monday, European soccer's top executives met, but only a couple of minutes were spent discussing the impact of the COVID-19 disease on the 24-team European Championship tournament being staged



EMILIO ANDREOLI, UEFA/AP

Inter Milan, left, and Ludogorets line up inside the empty San Siro stadium in Milan, Italy ahead of their Europa League soccer match last Thursday.

across the continent in three months.

UEFA is trying to dampen any panic about the impact of the fast-spreading virus even as uncertainty persists.

"The UEFA president (Aleksander Ceferin) immediately set the tone that the panic around all this may be worse than the virus itself," Alexei Sorokin, a Russian member of the UEFA executive committee, said after a meeting in Amsterdam.

Unlike the usual format of one or two hosts for the Euros, games in this edition of the quadrennial event are taking place in 12 stadiums in 12 countries. The logistical problems already anticipated of moving thousands of fans around the continent are now potentially accompanied by health risks.

"There wasn't much discussion about it because there is not much we can do about

it," Phil Townsend, UEFA's managing director of communications, said after the executive committee meeting.

Meanwhile, German media reported that a local soccer fan is suspected of infecting people in Salzburg with the virus while traveling there for last week's Salzburg-Eintracht Frankfurt game in the Europa League. It was unclear if the person actually attended the game, which was postponed for 24 hours because of bad weather.

Also, the International Biathlon Union announced that a World Cup in the Czech Republic will take place without spectators. The races in Nové Město, due to run from Thursday through Sunday, would likely have attracted 100,000 people.

Five-time Olympic gold medalist Martin Fourcade questioned why spectators were banned without similar restrictions for athletes and teams, "in spite of the fact we were all in Italy less than 14 days ago" at the world championships.

In Switzerland, where the federal government has prohibited events of more than 1,000 people, the ice hockey league decided on Monday to suspend play for two weeks. Playoffs were to begin in the top two divisions this weekend. The 24 clubs agreed at an emergency meeting to suspend all games until the current federal order expires on March 15.

MLB



PHOTOS BY CHARLIE REEDER/AP

Above: Greg Bird, who was with the New York Yankees for five years, is competing to be the starter at first base for the Texas Rangers. Below: Veteran Todd Frazier, who played for the Mets the last two seasons, is expected to be the Rangers' starting third baseman this season.

Corner market: Rangers rely on critical free agents Frazier, Bird

By STEPHEN HAWKINS

Associated Press

Todd Frazier and Greg Bird are at opposite corners for the Texas Rangers, and at different stages in their careers.

Frazier clearly was the top choice at third base for the Rangers, considering their well-publicized pursuit of top free agent Anthony Rendon this offseason. But the former two-time All-Star can provide some veteran stability after six different players started at the hot corner for Texas last season following the retirement of Adrian Beltre.

"I'm just trying to be who I am, and trying to maintain that position," said the 34-year-old Frazier, with his fifth team and going into his 10th big league season. "So for me, play the defense I know how, focus on driving guys in, and the rest will take care of itself."

The 27-year-old Bird signed a nonroster deal before spring training, getting an opportunity to compete to be the Rangers' first baseman after being plagued by a series of injuries the past five years with the New York Yankees.

"He's an impressive, impressive kid," Rangers manager Chris Woodward said. "His approach to the plate, he doesn't swing at balls, which is a good one for me. But also when he gets strikes, he does a lot of damage. And talking to him, that mentality matches obviously the performance on the field."

Teammates during the second half of the 2017 season with the New York Yankees, Frazier and Bird now have lockers next to each other in the Rangers' spring training clubhouse in Surprise, Ariz.



Frazier spent the past two seasons with the New York Mets. Bird played only 82 games for the Yankees in 2018 after ankle surgery, then was limited to 10 games at the start of last season before being sidelined by a planter fascia tear in his left foot.

The Rangers knew it wouldn't be easy to replace Beltre. The four-time All-Star and five-time Gold Glove winner with 3,166 career hits retired after the 2018 season.

Former two-time All-Star shortstop Asdrubal Cabrera was signed last offseason and switched to third base. He filled that spot until being released right after the trade deadline, then played primarily second base the rest of the season for the World Series champion Washington Nationals.

After Rendon left the Nationals and opted for a seven-year deal with the Los Angeles Angels early in free agency, the Rangers were consistently mentioned as possible landing spots for Nolan Arenado from Colorado or Kris

Bryant from the Chicago Cubs when it seemed that one of those All-Star third basemen could possibly be traded.

Frazier signed with the Rangers in mid-January, a \$3.5 million deal for this season that includes a 2021 club option with a \$1.5 million buyout.

"Todd, he's been around a while, and brings a lot of energy, a lot of passion to the game," Woodward said. "He represents a lot of what we preach internally, just his attitude."

The right-handed Bird became a free agent in November when he refused an outright assignment to Triple-A, and was a bit surprised by an offer from the Rangers.

But Texas had five different players start at first base last season. Ronald Guzman, a young left-hander who is a strong defender, had the most starts with 72, but hit only 134 against lefties. General manager Jon Daniels said Bird was signed to compete for the job, not to just be part of a platoon situation.

Braves' Markakis brings leadership

Associated Press

FORT MYERS, Fla. — As he searched for the best things Atlanta Braves outfielder Nick Markakis brings to the team, bench coach Walt Weiss shared several.

Highly credible. Strong, quiet leader. One of the most respected players in baseball. Humble. Calming force.

But you could tell Weiss had something else on his mind.

"He's one of those guys that's the conscience of the team," Weiss said.

Markakis made some of the strongest comments this spring about the Houston Astros sign-stealing scandal.

The soundbite — "I feel every single guy over there deserves a beating" — is what most people heard. But his other comments on how this affected baseball's integrity spoke more about Markakis.

"I know we're all competitors, we're out to compete, but there are right ways to do it and wrong ways to do it. I 100% disagree with the way they did it. A lot of people were hurt by it."

Weiss wasn't surprised by what Markakis said. "That fire runs pretty deep," he said.

"When you see something with our team, it gets guys thinking. 'Should we do this, should we not do this?'" Weiss said. "Let's watch Nicky or ask him to see if this is what we should be doing. That's powerful."

Entering his 15th season, the 36-year-old Markakis is part



CURTIS COMPTON/AP

Atlanta Braves outfielder Nick Markakis is in his 15th season.

of a deep outfield that includes Ronald Acuna, who is talking a 50-homer, 50-steal season, newcomer Marcell Ozuna, three-time Gold Glove Ender Inciarte and Adam Duvall, who had a strong postseason.

Markakis hit a solid .285 for the NL East champions last year.

"Everything works out for a reason," Markakis said. "The only thing you can do is everything you can. We're here for each other, pulling for each other. You want people to be successful."

"It's a good mix of young and old guys. With this team, all the experience, talent and passion is there. Braves fans should be excited," he said.

Markakis said he doesn't try to impart his views on other guys. In fact, he says he seeks to learn things from them.

Grand jury to examine death of Angels' Skaggs

Los Angeles Times

TEMPE, Ariz. — A Texas grand jury has been hearing evidence that could form the basis for criminal charges related to the death of Los Angeles Angels pitcher Tyler Skaggs, two people familiar with the matter told the Los Angeles Times.

The people spoke on condition of anonymity because of the ongoing proceedings.

Erin Dooley, a spokeswoman for the United States attorney's office for the Northern District of Texas, told the Times via email: "I'm afraid I don't have anything on the Skaggs matter for you at the moment."

Laurie Levenson, a professor at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles and former federal prosecutor, called the involvement of a grand jury "significant."

Said Levenson: "It means there's at least some concern about how widespread this incident might be by those who provided drugs, were involved in the

activities, knew about them, may have made misrepresentations, whatever the connection might be."

Skaggs was 27 when he died in his Texas hotel room July 1, hours after the Angels arrived on a flight from California. An autopsy revealed that Skaggs aspired, with a mixture of fentanyl, oxycodone and alcohol in his system.

In October, the Times reported that at least six players with the Angels at the time of Skaggs' death had been interviewed by agents of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

Eric Kay, the Angels' director of communications at the time of Skaggs' death, told agents he illegally obtained six oxycodone pills and gave three to Skaggs several days before the team left California for Texas, ESPN reported in October. Kay said he had previously provided oxycodone to Skaggs and had abused it with him for years.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Golden's silence

First-year USF coach impresses colleagues with his sideline calm

By JANIE MCCAULEY
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Those who know Todd Golden best are amazed by his even-keel temperament when facing the most pressure-packed circumstances. He's unflappable on the University of San Francisco sideline, unfazed despite being among the youngest head coaches in the country.

Those who know him best also realize Golden has always been ready for this challenge, built for this job.

Still, some pals and colleagues have a little fun and good-naturedly beg Golden to get more spirited, maybe let loose just a little, or perhaps go on an out-of-character rant at the referees for a serious change of pace.

Golden, 34, just can't seem to do it — he is already developing a nice rapport with the officials, picking his battles. So it might be a while before he gets a technical, considering he hasn't really come close to losing his cool so far, with the Dons (20-11) preparing for their West Coast Conference tournament opener Friday against either LMU or San Diego in Las Vegas. USF is in fifth place in the league, trailing Pacific and three probable NCAA Tournament teams Gonzaga, BYU and Saint Mary's.

"I've tried a couple times this year, but no dice," Golden joked.

Golden is doing things his way on the Hilltop since being promoted in late March last year to replace Kyle Smith, who departed USF to take over the Washington State program.

New athletic director Joan McDermott had no issues taking a chance on the "untested" Golden, though she has heard about it from critics. She has seen and heard plenty of great things about his leadership and ability to run a program while facing the hurdles that come at a mid-major college.

"What I didn't know was how he would handle the pressure and be able to maintain his composure

during a game," McDermott said. "He has shown that he can do this and has even gone up against some of the seasoned coaches in the league and held his own. I think this is really the story about Todd. I have been in awe of how he has handled himself."

Sure, Golden gets razzed on occasion around campus as the sporty, fun — not to mention young — new guy in charge.

His unique approach has impressed his peers, quickly catching the eye of colleagues not only around the West Coast Conference but also the country.

"He's doing a great job. He's a great young mind," Gonzaga coach Mark Few said. "He does some real creative things offensively and defensively. I like how he's building the roster. He's going to be a good one."

Veteran USF baseball coach Nino Giarratano pulled Golden aside with an encouraging word for the first-year men's basketball coach and his next-door neighbor after the Dons stunned BYU 83-82 on Jan. 25.

"As I was coming home, I rolled down the window and said: 'Todd, you're my hero. Anyone that beats BYU is my hero for the week, so you're my hero for the week,'" Giarratano shared.

There was some friendly teasing, too.

Golden starred at Saint Mary's in the East Bay suburbs under Randy Bennett and then-assistant Smith, reaching two NCAA Tournaments with the Gaels — and Smith, of course, was thrilled with McDermott's choice.

"By hiring Todd, I felt very grateful that Joan and the administration believed in what we were doing. Todd not only knows how to teach the system, he also played five years at Saint Mary's and lived the experience," said Smith. "He is a self-made coach."

A former professional player for two years with Maccabi Haifa of Israel's top division, Golden also served a year under Smith at Columbia before two seasons at Auburn.



GARY LANDERS/AP

Dayton fans cheer before the team's game against Davidson on Feb. 28. It's possible the NCAA Tournament, with First Four games scheduled to begin in Dayton on March 17, could be played without fans because of coronavirus concerns.

Madness modified: NCAA looks at tourney changes due to virus

By EBYEN NOVY-WILLIAMS
Bloomberg

The National Collegiate Athletic Association is examining all options for the upcoming men's basketball tournament, including the possibility of holding games without fans, as coronavirus continues to spread across the U.S.

"If you can think of it, it's something that we've gone through an analysis around," NCAA Chief Operating Officer Donald Remy said in an interview. "We've contingency planned for all circumstances."

The massive tournament — slated to start in two weeks, with games in 14 U.S. cities — accounts for more than 80% of the NCAA's annual revenue. Over the weekend, an advocacy group for college athletes suggested holding the event without an audience present, and as the virus fears mount, some have openly wondered if March Madness games will be held at all.

As it considers its options, the NCAA is speaking daily with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and has formed a medical advisory group that includes former Surgeon General Vivek Murthy and NCAA Chief Medical Officer Brian Hainline. Should the worst-case scenario occur — and the Indianapolis-based organization suffers severe monetary damages as a result of the virus — Remy said the NCAA has reserves and a business-interruption insurance policy that it believes would partially cover losses.

As for timing, NCAA leaders spoke on a couple of conference calls Monday about the deadline for making a firm decision on the

'While everything is fluid, we're going to have to make some decisions and not have it wait until the last couple of days.'

Brian Hainline
NCAA chief medical officer

tournament.

"We haven't arrived at the decision date," said Hainline, who is a neurologist. "But while everything is fluid, we're going to have to make some decisions and not have it wait until the last couple of days."

The virus, which originated in China, has now spread all over the world. As of Tuesday, there were over 92,000 reported cases worldwide, with more than 3,100 deaths related to the disease. In the U.S., the virus has been found in a handful of cities, with the first American deaths reported in Washington state. One of the sites for the tournament's first two rounds is Spokane, the state's second-largest city.

While the NCAA executives wouldn't go into detail about the contingency plans, sports events all over the globe have been canceled, postponed or held without fans as a result of the virus. They include Summer Olympics qualifiers, major European soccer games, and marathons and half-marathons.

The NCAA's concern goes well beyond men's basketball. There's a women's basketball tournament with a similar national footprint that happens simultaneously, plus a number of other championships and countless on-campus competitions scheduled in the next few months.

That said, the men's basketball tournament is of unique importance to the governing body, which neither owns nor operates the College Football Playoff. The NCAA had \$1.1 billion of revenue in 2018 and the vast majority of that — more than four-fifths — came from media contracts and licensing specifically related to the men's tournament. Remy said the NCAA has spoken with all of its media partners and the major U.S. leagues to discuss its options.

The NCAA also redistributes almost all of that money to its members via a variety of different funds. The biggest, called the Basketball Fund, pays out to conferences in direct correlation to their schools' success in the men's basketball tournament.

The NCAA tournament is scheduled to tip off in Dayton, Ohio, on March 17. The Final Four, in Atlanta, is April 4-6.

The NCAA says it is aware a decision on the games might eventually be made by someone else. Last week, Switzerland banned all public gatherings of more than 1,000 people. The following day, France did the same for events with more than 5,000 people.

For now, Hainline said the NCAA has received no instructions from the CDC or the U.S. government requiring changes to be made.



YOUNG KWAK/AP

First-year San Francisco coach Todd Golden, 34, has yet to get his first technical as a head coach. His Dons are 20-11.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL



CHUCK BURTON/AP

Baylor's Jared Butler, right, shoots over Texas Tech's Terrence Shannon Jr. during the first half of their game Monday in Waco, Texas. Baylor won 71-68 in overtime.

Top 25 roundup

Teague, No. 4 Baylor top Texas Tech in OT

Associated Press

WACO, Texas — With the shot clock winding down in overtime and a defender in his face, Baylor guard MaCio Teague quickly stepped back behind the line and hit a three-pointer.

"That was crazy, saved the day like Superman," Bears guard Jared Butler said.

Teague made that big shot with 1:13 left in overtime, and Butler made two free throws after his steal with 11 seconds left as the No. 4 Bears held on for a 71-68 win over Texas Tech on Monday night that kept them in contention for their first Big 12 title and a No. 1 seed in the NCAA Tournament.

After Teague's three made it 69-65, Kyler Edwards hit a three for Texas Tech to lead the lead one. The Red Raiders then had a chance to take the lead after Freddie Gillespie missed inside. But short-handed Baylor (26-3, 15-2 Big 12) was able to seal the win after Butler's steal when Chris Clarke tried to make a pass inside over the Baylor guard, who was quickly fouled.

Devonte Bando had 18 points and Butler 17 for the Bears, who had lost two of their previous three games after a Big 12 record 23-game winning streak that had knocked them out of the No. 1 spot in the AP Top 25 poll. Teague had 14 points, five in overtime, and Freddie Gillespie grabbed 10 rebounds.

"It was tough losing to TCU (on Saturday)... Guys are banged up and it was a quick turnaround," Butler said. "It just takes the will to win, and commitment. There's nothing you can draw up for this win. It's just the will to win and that's what you saw."

David Moretti was tightly defended by Davion Mitchell, despite his four fouls, when he took a wild three-pointer at the end that wasn't close for Texas Tech (18-12, 9-8).

No. 12 Duke 88, N.C. State 69: Freshman Cassius Stanley scored 14 of his 18 points after halftime as the host Blue Devils took over in the second half to beat the Wolfpack.

Fellow rookie Vernon Carey Jr. added 17 points for Duke, which shot 63% after halftime and had a run of 17 straight scoring possessions to build a big lead. The Blue Devils also dominated N.C. State on the glass (46-27), while their move away from their man and pressure defenses to deploy a zone late in the first half took the Wolfpack out of their early aggressive rhythm.

It was quite a reversal for Duke (24-6, 14-5 Atlantic Coast Conference), which lost the first meeting 88-66 in Raleigh less than two weeks ago for Mike Krzyzewski's most lopsided loss to an unranked opponent in his four decades leading the program. It was also a welcome response after back-to-back losses on the road.

Style: Merrimack isn't eligible this season for NCAA Tournament

FROM BACK PAGE

program's 70-year existence at the Division II level, the Warriors weren't expected to be more than a blip in the NCAA's top division in the first year of reclassifying.

That was underscored in the preseason when, despite coming off three straight Division II tournament appearances, the Northeast Conference coaches picked Merrimack to finish last among the league's 11 schools.

The Warriors smashed those expectations, clinching at least a share of the NEC regular-season championship with a 69-58 win over Central Connecticut in their season finale Thursday. A loss by Saint Francis (Pa.) in its finale on Saturday gave the Warriors the championship outright. Merrimack (20-11) is the first school in NCAA history to win a regular-season conference title in its first Division I season.

The Warriors' 20 wins are also a record by a first-year reclassifying school.

The one thing Merrimack won't have this season is a place in March Madness.

By NCAA rule, the Warriors are ineligible to compete in their conference tournament or the NCAA Tournament until they become full Division I members in the 2023-24 season. They are, however, eligible to play in the

College Basketball Invitational or CollegeInsider.com Postseason Tournament.

Even with the NCAA's off the table, Gallo said his team remains excited for whatever is next.

"Each one of those steps along the way has been a different form of motivation," Gallo said. "You know, at first it was, 'Well, we'll show we're not just a Division II team.' And then it was, 'OK. These guys want to pick us last.' ... So there's been a lot of milestones along the way that we've been able to use for motivation for these guys."

New England's only Catholic Augustinian college, Merrimack's athletic programs began with men's hockey in 1955, winning a Division II national title in 1978. But as Division II became more regionalized, the Division I programs like Boston College, Boston University and Northeastern were penalized for playing D-II teams.

Merrimack slowly grew to have 24 men's and women's varsity programs, though only the men's and women's hockey programs competed at the Division I level in Hockey East.

School leadership sought to change that and included in its 2011 strategic plan a goal to move all its programs into Division I. That opportunity arrived



MARY SCHWALM/AP

Head coach Joe Gallo played for Merrimack under coach Bert Hammel before succeeding him in 2016.

in 2018 when the NEC invited Merrimack's non-hockey programs to become the league's 11th member.

Coming off a conference tournament championship in the final season in Division II, Gallo went into the preseason believing his team could do well on the next level.

That perception took a hit when the Warriors opened the season with a 20-point loss at Maine.

Gallo, who played for Merrimack under coach Bert Hammel before succeeding him in 2016,

remembers sleeping for about an hour that night. He pondered what had happened to the senior-driven, defensive-minded roster that had carried his team the previous three seasons.

Two nights later came a trip to face the Big Ten's Northwestern. The Warriors trailed 55-50 with 9½ minutes remaining before using a 17-4 run to propel them to a 71-61 win.

Merrimack also beat Army, but struggled at times during a 6-7 start to the nonconference portion of the schedule. Things changed

when they opened conference play by winning 10 of their first 11. They finished 14-4.

"You have ups. So you have downs. But like all those ups and downs, you become way stronger than you actually thought you would be," senior point guard Juvaris Hayes said.

Merrimack ended its season allowing a league-low 60.2 points per game while forcing a league-best 174 turnovers. One of the biggest reasons was the play of Hayes, who had a league-high 121 steals. He ended his career with 457 steals, eclipsing the NCAA record that had stood for 17 years.

"It started when I was probably 10," Hayes said. "I was always that kid who didn't want to cross over in front of."

Hayes has been supported by fellow seniors Jaleel Lord and Idris Joyner. The trio started together at New Jersey's famed St. Anthony High School, going 32-0 as seniors and winning a state championship together in 2016.

Lord said Gallo fostered an environment at Merrimack that allowed them to play with freedom, while stressing a defensive approach that focused on creating "panic" for opponents.

"He's just always given us the bread crumbs and we just follow," Lord said.

SPORTS



Staying patient
Six-game skid doesn't have Penguins pushing panic button » **NHL, Page 19**

COLLEGE BASKETBALL



PHOTOS BY MARY SCHWALM/AP

Above: Merrimack College guard Juvaris Hayes, left, reaches in to force a steal from Central Connecticut guard Myles Baker during Thursday's game in North Andover, Mass. Below: Guard Jaleel Lord, right, and teammate Idris Joyner celebrate Merrimack's 69-58 victory that earned at least a share of the Northeast Conference regular-season title.

Arriving in style

Merrimack makes history in D-I debut

BY KYLE HIGHTOWER
Associated Press

DID YOU KNOW?

ANORTH ANDOVER, Mass. About 25 miles north of Boston, in a 1,500-seat gymnasium in a quiet nook just off State Route 125, Joe Gallo is busy teaching basketball.

Arms folded as he walks the length of the court, Gallo watches as a ball gets away from one of

Merrimack is the first school to win a regular-season conference title in its first Division I season. A loss by Saint Francis (Pa.) in its finale on Saturday gave the Warriors the championship outright. Their 20 wins are also a record by a first-year reclassifying school.

SOURCE: Associated Press

his players during a practice drill and ricochets off the bottom of the retractable bleachers.

"We don't stop competing!" Gallo shouts. "Compete! Compete! Compete!"

Welcome to Merrimack College, home of one of the biggest surprises in college basketball this season.

After spending most of the

SEE STYLE ON PAGE 23



Grand jury looking into death of Skaggs

MLB, Page 21

League warns players to avoid high-fives

NBA, Page 18

